252
Mau/Bca
67770

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

SERMONS

PREACHED IN COUNTRY CHURCHES

SERMONS

PREACHED IN COUNTRY CHURCHES

67770

BY

FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE

SECOND EDITION

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1880

The Right of Translation and Reproduction is reserved

CHARLES DICKENS AND EVANS,
CRYSTAL PALACE PRESS.

PREFACE.

THE title of these Sermons exactly expresses what they are. Mr. Maurice frequently took duty in some quiet village during the summer vacation. He found more rest in ministering to the poor and in speaking to them, than in visits to English watering-places or in foreign travel. The poor "heard him gladly." They understood his teaching, and crowded to hear him. It is thought that words which went home to the hearts of many simple and ignorant people may be blessed to others, though unaccompanied by the voice and the face which made them so precious to those who heard them spoken.

GEORGINA F. MAURICE.

CONTENTS.

SERMON		PAGE
I.	The Pool of Bethesda	1
II.	The Gift of Hearing	10
III.	The Spirit of Love	18
IV.	Waiting for Christ	29
V.	St. Peter's Conversion	40
VI.	The Sick of the Palsy	50
VII.	The Marriage Feast of the King's Son	62
VIII.	The Redemption of the Body	72
IX.	The Spirit the Help to Prayer	80
X.	The Law of Inheritance	88
XI.	The Deliverer from Crime	98
XII.	St. John Baptist's Day	110
XIII.	The Transfiguration	121
XIV.	The Publican	131
XV.	The Spirit and the Flesh	139
XVI.	Man's Dominion	148
XVII.	God and Mammon	157
XVIII.	The Glory of the Cross	165
XIX.	The Widow of Nain's Son	172
XX.	Justification	179
XXI.	Truth	190
XXII.	Ministers of Christ	197
XXIII.	The Light of the World	206
XXIV.	The Lord of the Winds and Sea	214

SERMON	PAGE
XXV.—The Man of Sorrows	222
XXVI.—St. Matthew's Day	229
XXVII.—Michaelmas Day	236
XXVIII.—God's Visitations	243
XXIX.—The Eternal Weight of Glory	250
XXX.—The Grace of God	258
XXXI.—The New Covenant	269
XXXII.—The Last Supper	277
XXXIII.—The Law of Liberty	284
XXXIV.—The Sure and Certain Hope	291
XXXV.—The Baptism of Repentance	297
XXXVI.—God's Covenant with the Nations	305
XXXVII.—Life and Raiment	313
XXXVIII.—The House of God	320
XXXIX.—St. John the Evangelist's Day	332
XL.—Suffering and Glory	342
XLI.—Repentance and Conversion	350

SERMONS

PREACHED IN COUNTRY CHURCHES.

SERMON I.

THE POOL OF BETHESDA.

Preached at Clyro, 8th Sunday after Trinity, July 17, 1853.

"Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."
St. John v. 8.

You have heard in the second lesson this morning where our Lord spoke these words. There was a pool near the sheep-market in the city of Jerusalem. The people of the city believed that the water of this pool could heal sick people. They did not think it could heal at all times, but only when there was some stir in it. They thought that an angel or messenger of God caused it to stir. They, therefore, who had anything ailing them lay in crowds about this pool waiting for the moving of the water. It was so one Sabbath day when Jesus was walking in Jerusalem. We are not told that He spoke to the sick people generally;

but He fixed His eyes on one who had been ill for thirty-eight years. He said to him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" The man said he could not reach the pool in time to get any good from it. When it began to move numbers pushed forward and bathed. He was very weak, and others were quicker than he was, and there was no one to lift him in. "Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked."

I have said that the people of Jerusalem thought that there was some advantage to be gained from bathing in this pool. No doubt they had reason for thinking so. St. John speaks as if they had. One and another had found good from the water, and therefore all of them thought that they might. They were just such men as we are. One tells another of some medicine that has been serviceable to him. Those that are ill and long to be well, desire to try whether it may not serve them also. And if they observe that the benefit comes at one season rather than another, then they wish to seize the very moment, and if they fail, they often fancy they should have been quite cured, if it had not been for some unfortunate accident, or some person who was in the way, and hindered them. The people of Jerusalem believed also that the good which was in the pool did not come from the pool itself; but that it was God's gift. His angel stirred it. He put the healing power into it. This belief, too, was on the whole a right one. They might have foolish fancies that they saw the

angel going down into the pool at certain moments; just as people in our country have had, and may have still. But they were not wrong that everything which is healthful comes from the Giver of all good, they were not wrong in saying, It must be some power from Him which makes any one well who has been sick; able to walk, who has been fixed to his bed and helpless.

Jesus did not come to the couch of that poor man who had been ill for thirty-eight years, to tell him that this was not so. He wished him to believe it more than he had ever believed it before. And yet, you see, He did not assist to put him into the pool; He did not say, Wait a little, and the angel will stir it again, then you may profit by it as others have done. But He said at once, "Rise up and walk." The poor cripple must have wondered. He who spake these words looked like another man. He spoke with a voice like his voice; He had not any signs of being greater than those about Him. The rulers of the Jews thought nothing of Him. And yet He took upon Him to do what the Angel could not do. He addressed the man as if He were his master; as if He knew him thoroughly; as if He understood exactly what his weakness was; as if the power to make him a healthy living man was in Him. And we are told that the impotent man felt it was in Him. The word did not fall dead upon his ears. It gave him what he wanted. He rose, took up his bed, and walked.

It was a good thing for that poor cripple, doubtless,

that, after thirty-eight years' illness, he should be able to feel his limbs again, and do his work freely and usefully. But what is it to us? Why should it be put down in this Gospel of St. John? Why should it be a Gospel or good news to us who live eighteen hundred years since this man has been dead, in a country thousands of miles from his? It could not be good news to us to tell us that there was at that time in Jerusalem a pool which had now and then some healing power; for Jerusalem is altogether changed, and we hear of no such pool now; and, if there were such, what could it concern the poor and sick people of England and Wales? It could not help us much to hear reports of other waters nearer to us that might sometimes be useful to one or another. For they might not do us good in *our* diseases; or we might not be able to reach them at the right time, as this poor man was not, though he was so close to the spot, and took so much pains. And it could be no great good news to us that there were kind angels who sometimes took an interest in poor mortals, and sent them aid; for we should say to ourselves, What are they against the multitudes of dangers and evils that are besetting us continually? But if we could be told of one who is always alive and always at hand, who is the same to us as He was to the people of Jerusalem, or to any one of those people; one who is not here to-day and gone to-morrow, strong now and weak at another time, kind for a little while, and then hard or indifferent; but who is at hand when we think least of

Him, and is mighty when we are least able to help ourselves; and, best of all, who has the same mind to us, however changeable our minds may be; if we could be told of such an one, and that He has tried His strength with our enemies and has prevailed against them, this would be good news; this would be news that every one everywhere might care to hear.

And it is just this news which the lesson to-day preaches to us. It does not tell us that Jesus Christ had a special regard for that man who had been ill thirty-eight years, and was lying beside the Pool of Bethesda, and that therefore He cured him. But it gives us this instance, and a number of other instances, that we may know who it is that is the Lord and Master over our bodies and our spirits, and the bodies and spirits of all men that are living now, and that have ever lived, who it is from whom we get strength when we are strong, who it is that restores strength to us when we are weak, who gives wisdom to every physician, and virtue to every spring and to every medicine, who it is that raises every sick man from his couch, and enables him to do his work again after he has been tied hand and foot. This lesson says to us, You are not to depend upon one place or another; upon this favourite remedy or another; no, nor upon the gifts of God's angels. All gifts come from your Lord, all angels are His servants; and therefore it is to Him, and not to them, you are to look in all hours of weakness and suffering. What you want in these hours is not merely some one to cure you, but

some one to understand what you feel, and to feel with you. If you find a fellow-creature, a sister or a wife, who can do that, you are more glad than even of some relief from the pain. It is a relief from the pain to have some one who can enter into it. Now, the great Lord of all is He who has borne our weaknesses and carried our sicknesses; who knows what they are, not by report, but by experience; and those secret troubles which you cannot tell to the nearest and dearest companion, that which makes you suffer what other people, perhaps, would not suffer, though they had the same sickness and pain: these He knows of. You can be sure that there is One who has the most entire acquaintance with all your bodily sufferings, and with all that is in your hearts too, with all the weakness, and folly, and sin that is there.

Yes, but that is what we shrink from! We might be glad of a healing pool, glad of a kind physician, or a kind sister, or a kind angel. But should we like one who knew all that we were doing, and wishing, and thinking: all the strange things that are going on in our hearts; all that ever has gone on in them ever since we were born? Should not we say, Oh, hide me from that look! Do not let all the dark desires I have had, and all the bad words I have spoken, and the acts I have committed—do not let my dearest friend know them. I could not bear it; he would certainly turn away from me. Brethren, it is a most natural feeling; it is one which we all of us have had.

And when people have told us how righteous Jesus Christ is, and how hateful all evil is to Him, we have thought that He was the very last person before whom we should like to be laid open. But let us remember it well, brethren, He who is to heal us must be acquainted with all that has made us sick; and He cannot do that if He does not know us, our own selves, and all that we have done, and all that we have been. Be assured, too, that there is such an one. You know that there is. Your consciences speak of Him. When words you have spoken, and deeds you have done, and thoughts you have thought years ago, come out clear and fresh before you, as they often do; that is a proof that there is some one near you who is acquainted with you, not only with what has happened to you—with what other people have said to you, or done to you—but with all that has ever been in you, right or wrong, fair or foul, good or evil. I know it is a thought that frightens us at first very much indeed, and it ought to frighten us; but we must face it, because it is true. We cannot shrink from this searcher of hearts. We cannot get out of His way. When we try to forget Him, He shows that He remembers us. When we have lost ourselves in all kinds of nonsense and vanity, He comes to us and shows us to ourselves, and makes us tremble.

But who is He? I have told you, it is that Lord Jesus Christ who said to the man who had been sick thirty-eight years, "Rise up and walk." It is He of

whom we read in all the Gospels that He went about doing good, healing the sick, and casting out devils. We know, too, what manner of being He is, for He has made Himself known. We know what He would do to each of us. We know certainly that He is the healer; and that He would heal us of our infirmities, and that He can do it. We cannot tell, indeed, that He will cure the bodily ailments of any particular man at once. Of all that were round the Pool of Bethesda at that time, this is the only one who rose up and walked. But we know for certain that His purpose to every man is to make them right, and to reverse whatever makes them wrong. We know for certain that if He lets a man remain sick, it is because there is something else in him that needs to be cured besides, something which must be cured if he is to be a sound man. And this, brethren, is the cure of those most secret evils of our hearts, of that which puts everything else in us out of order. When we find out that we have this friend, this healer, this life-giver, so close to us, and that we may turn to Him and confess all that is oppressing us —all the evil of other men, yes, and all our own—all that we are most ashamed of in the past part of our lives—all that we are most ashamed of in ourselves now;—when we believe that He is such an one, and that He can understand us, and that He can heal us, then our lives become altogether different; then we can become simple, honest, brave men, who do not want to hide anything from our Maker; then we can come

boldly to Him every day to ask Him to make us true when we feel false, and brave when we feel cowardly, and strong to act when we feel as if we could do nothing. So this is a lesson for us who are going about the world, as much as for those who are on sick beds. We want healing—continual healing—just as they do. We want strength as much as they do; strength to be right and to do right; strength for the work that we have to do each day.

And this is part of the lesson which we ought to remember. It was the Sabbath-day on which our Lord healed the impotent man. The Jewish rulers were angry; they thought our Lord ought not to have healed on the Sabbath-day. But He declared that the Sabbath-day was the very day for healing: that God means it to be a day of healing and blessing to all His creatures. We come here on Sundays because it is so. We come to Church not to say a few prayers, or to hear a few words from the pulpit, but to learn who the great healer is, and how we are to be healed. We come that we may get strength to walk during the week, to go through the business of it truly and heartily; as if we were God's children, sent into the world by Him to till the earth and subdue it, and to be like Him, loving and just, and lowly, as His well-beloved Son Jesus Christ was on earth and is in heaven. May He enable us to be so this week by His good Spirit, and then we shall feel that Christ heals on the Sabbath as He did of old.

SERMON II.

THE GIFT OF HEARING.

Preached at Clyro, 12th Sunday after Trinity, August 14, 1853.

"And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well; He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."—ST. MARK vii. 37.

IN the Epistle to-day St. Paul tells us that he was a minister of the New Testament, or of God's new Covenant. At first we may not understand what that means; but he explains it to us himself. He says that the children of Israel in the old time had a law given them which was written on stones. It was a good law, a blessed law. God gave it to them. It declared His will to them. But, though it declared His will, it could not make them do His will. It was said on the stone that men were not to worship idols, or kill, or steal. But they did worship idols, and kill, and steal. They did it though the law said it was death to do so. How was this? Could not God's law, then, be obeyed? Was it only given to torment men and make them

know what a bad state they were in, and what misery was in store for them?

So many men thought; at one time St. Paul himself thought so. He had tried hard to keep the law, he fancied he had kept it. But he found that he did not love it, that his mind was against it; that, if he did not break it, he wished to break it. He found that, though the law said, "Thou shalt not covet," he did covet; nay, it seemed to him as if he coveted more because he was forbidden to do it. He found, therefore, that his mind and God's mind were at variance.

This made him very miserable. He saw that God's law was good, very good, and yet he felt as if he must hate it. He honoured it, and yet he would have been glad if he had never heard of it. Then it was shown him that God does not merely give a law upon stones, but that He promises to write this law on our hearts, to put the love of it into them; to make our minds like His. This he learnt was God's new covenant or Testament. This was what He promised He would do for men when His Son came into the world. And this He had done. For Jesus, the Son of God, loved His Father's law, and delighted to do it. This law was in His heart. He fulfilled it altogether, and bore all that it laid upon Him.

And now that God has given His Son to take our flesh and to die for us, He deals with us as sons. He says, I will send the Spirit of my Son into your hearts, that you may be like Him. I make a New Testament

or covenant with you in His blood. And it is this—You shall love the things which I love, and hate what I hate.

Now, St. Paul says that he was a preacher of this New Testament or covenant. He is very thankful, and proud of that office. He thinks it the most glorious that a man could have. For he says, I am not sent to tell men of what they must do, but to tell them how they can do it. I am not sent to say, you will die if you do not keep these commandments. But I am sent to say, God gives you His own life, His own Spirit, that you may be able to keep His commandments. I am a minister of Righteousness, not of condemnation; of the Spirit, not of the letter; of the law in the heart, not of the law on stones.

He might well rejoice and wonder that he had such a trust. And yet he knew also, and he tells us in this Epistle, that there were people to whom his Gospel was hid, who did not heed it at all. It is not, he says, that there is any veil over God's countenance, Christ has taken that away. But it is that there is a veil over them, over their own hearts, and that they will not turn to God that this veil may be taken away. It is in vain I tell them of His love; of His sending His Son to make them one with Him; of His sending His Spirit to write His laws in them. They do not know what such words signify; they do not acknowledge there is anything in them that wants to be made right; they are content to be as they are.

Brethren, this same New Testament ministry exists in the world now. God sends His message to you as much as He did to the people of Corinth or Ephesus, to whom St. Paul preached. He tells you, every one of you, that He is your Father, and that He has sent His Son to die for you, and that He has reconciled you to Himself, and that His Spirit is ready to come and dwell with you, that His laws may be written in your hearts, and you may keep them. And you come here every Sunday because it is so, and you pray these prayers, and hear the Lessons and the Epistle and Gospel read, because it is so. All these are ministers to you of the New Testament. They tell you what God has done for you, and is doing for you; how He has taken the veil off His face, and is showing it to you in His Son—full of grace, and beauty, and love; and how He would make you after His own image, gracious and loving as He is.

But, if this is so, how comes it that so few people hear this Word? that it goes so little way with them? that it seems to be caught away and vanish almost as soon as it has been spoken? Oh! brethren! that we would ask ourselves how this comes to pass! Because, if we did, this great and terrible disease might be cured; this deafness might be taken away from us; we might be enabled to receive God's words into our inmost souls, and His words might bring forth fruit there unto life eternal.

And that is the reason, I think, why this Gospel

about Christ's curing the deaf and dumb man is joined to the Epistle about the ministry of the New Testament. It says very plainly to those who feel how hard it is for them to take in the New Testament message, how dull, and deaf, and stupid, they are. Yes, but that need not continue. There is a Physician at hand. There is one who doeth all things well, who maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.

I have told you before that the stories of Christ in the Gospel, whether they be of His healing the man at the Pool of Bethesda, or of His promising to draw men to Him on His Cross, or of His being shown to the Jews as their King, are all written for us. I have said that He is just as much among us as He was among the Jews in the city of Jerusalem, and that these words are to tell us what He is doing for some, and would be doing for us all.

First, then, I say that it is Christ who enables any one of us to hear any of the common sounds that enter into our ears as we walk out on an August day like this. If you have heard the singing of the birds or the running of the stream, or the voices of children as you came to church, then recollect it was Christ who caused you to hear them. He fills the earth and air with all melodies, and He gives to men the power of taking them in. By giving back hearing to this man who had lost it, He declared this; He said, I am the giver of hearing; the power comes from me. Think how wonderful that is. I suppose none of us have thought

of it seriously till we have been reminded by seeing deaf people, or by becoming more or less deaf ourselves, what the blessing of sounds is; what it is to have them shut out.

But I say again: if this trial comes to anyone of you in any degree, and then the power of hearing has been restored to you again, be sure that that was as much Christ's blessing to you, as it was His to the man we have read of this morning, over whom He sighed and said, "Ephphatha, be opened." It is not less His because you do not see Him before you, or because these words are not spoken. Whatever any physician does for you, is done by His power: it is His work. Be sure you confess that it is; and then you will love all that act as His servants to your bodies or your spirits, for His sake.

And now, then, I come back to what I spoke of before. I say that there is another kind of deafness besides that which cannot take in sounds. We may hear sounds, and yet the words that are within the sounds may never reach us. They may float about us, and seem as if they were coming unto us. And then we may feel just the same as if they had never been uttered; as far as we are concerned, we might as well have been a hundred miles away. But if they are words of health and life, words that come from the good God; words that are to make us right and true men; words that are to make all that is past fresh and new to us; and what is now going on around us good and

not evil; and what is to be hereafter through all ages blessed; it is a very sad thing, is it not, that they should be all lost upon us? A very sad thing that we cannot stop them, and hold them fast; a very sad thing that a man should have to remember some other day, on a death-bed, 'They were proclaimed to me; I was told they were intended for me, but I did not mind them; and now it seems as if I and they had nothing to do with each other any more.' But must it be so; shall it be so with any of us? What, when it is written, "He maketh the deaf to hear!" When we can say, Lord, Thou hast sent us these words; they are Thine. Thou didst come from heaven, and live and die on earth, that they might be ours. And Thou who dost give the ear to hear, and the heart to understand—and Thou who dost desire that we should hear and should understand—wilt not Thou heal us; wilt not Thou help us? Thou didst not care more for that poor deaf man, on the coast of Tyre and Sidon, than Thou dost care for me. Thou didst not die for him more than for me. And my ears are even more stopped, and stopped in a worse way than his were. Oh, once more say Ephphatha! be opened, to me and to all who have not received the good news of Thy New Testament into their hearts.

It is said, moreover, that the string of this man's tongue was loosed, for like most people who are born deaf, he was dumb also. So Christ declared Himself to be the Lord of speech as well as of hearing. He does

not only fill the world with sweet sounds, and give us the power to enjoy them, He also enables us to tell what we enjoy, and what we have seen and heard, and what is going on within us, to our fellow-men. Mighty power of speech! who can tell what that is? Why, what treasures of silver and gold are like that treasure? The greatest gift which the richest man in the world has, is that which the poorest has likewise. Words can do more than all the money and all the swords in the universe; money and swords are only their servants. But what mischief can they do as well as good! What curses can they spread abroad! How they can make neighbourhoods miserable; how they can overturn whole countries! Oh, what need have we of some one to rule over our tongues, to guide them, and to make them sources of health and not of pain!

Dear brethren, Christ is the master of them; he is called the Word in Holy Scripture; it is He who alone can command our words, so that they shall be good as He would have them be; so that they shall be mighty for His purpose. May He ever command yours and mine. And may the words of His New Testament break through all barriers that hinder them from entering into us, and be to us instruments of God's righteousness, of God's own Spirit.

SERMON III.

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE.

Preached at Clyro, 13th Sunday after Trinity, August 21, 1853.

"Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour to him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy upon him. Then said Jesus, Go, and do thou likewise."—ST. LUKE x. 36, 37.

I SPOKE to you last week of the law that was written on stones, and of the law that is written on men's hearts. There is more to be said about this matter yet. I think the Gospel to-day may make it clearer to us. Be sure that you remember who it is that causes the deafest ear to hear, and then you will ask Him that you may take in His own wonderful words.

On a certain day, St. Luke says, Jesus was telling His apostles that their eyes and ears were blessed, for that they saw things which prophets and kings had desired to see and had not seen, and to hear and had not heard.

The apostles, you know, were fishermen, poor men. What could it mean that they were better off than all the great men of their own country and of other

countries who had lived before them? They must have been pondering this thought in their minds, when one of the learned men of the Jews came up to Jesus, and said, "Master! what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" This lawyer thought he had kept the commandments; he did not remember that he had ever committed any great offence. But he supposed that was not enough to get eternal life; he must do something very special to please God, if he was to win such a prize as that. He had heard that Christ spoke of eternal life, and told His disciples that they might possess it. The lawyer asked Him, How can I get this life? What shall I do to please God, and obtain a reward which other men have not?

Our Lord did not answer him as he expected. He did not say, I know a secret which men in general do not know. I can tell you a new way of gaining this life which you have never heard. But He said, "What is written in the Law?" 'You are a lawyer; you are reading in the law continually. Has that told you nothing about eternal life?' Then the lawyer bethought him of some words in the book of Deuteronomy, where it is written, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." He had often read these words, and it came into his mind that perhaps the answer to his question might be there. If he loved God and loved his neighbour, he might have the reward he wanted; all that any man could

have. Our Lord told him he was right; if he did that, he would live.

But the lawyer was not satisfied; I suppose that he was never less satisfied.

For the thought struck him, Have I ever done this? Can I do this? If I had been bidden to bear some heavy burden; to torture myself in some strange way; even to kill myself, I could have done that. But when I am commanded to love—that is another thing altogether. Am I more loving because I have been told that it is right to be so? If I can only obtain eternal life at this price, shall I ever obtain it? I fancy these thoughts must have been in his mind first, but then came another. Was the law clear enough? It talked about his neighbour, but it did not say who his neighbour was. St. Luke says he was wishing to justify himself; not that anybody had found fault with him, but that some one was saying to him in his heart, 'Learned lawyer as thou art, thou hast not kept the law;' and he wanted to silence that voice, it tormented him.

But he had asked Jesus, Who is my neighbour? and he was to have his answer. The Lord told him a story. Again it was not what he supposed it would be. It was the story of a poor man—a Jew—who went down from the chief city of Judæa to Jericho. That was a very dangerous road, and the man fell among thieves. He was stripped of his raiment, and he was left half dead. A priest—the most holy man among the Jews—one who offered sacrifices to God for the

people, one who blessed the people in God's name, came travelling that way. The wounded man was there—one of his own countrymen—one of those for whom he presented prayers and sacrifices, and whom he was to bless. But the priest did not think this man was his neighbour. He went on and left him. Then came a Levite, one of the same tribe of the Jews with the priest. His business was especially to interpret the law to the people—that law which said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." He looked at the wounded man, but he did not think that he was his neighbour; he passed by on the other side. Not long after a Samaritan rode by. The man was not his countryman; he was not one of his friends; he belonged to a people with whom his people had no dealings. Moreover, the Samaritan was not considered a holy or religious man by the Jews at all; quite the contrary: they thought him a man whom God abhorred; one who could not possibly have eternal life. But this Samaritan *did* look upon the wounded man as his neighbour; he stopped his journey to help him. He poured oil and wine into his wounds; he set him on his own beast; he took him to an inn, and bade the landlord take care of him; and he said, as he went away, that whatever more was spent upon the poor traveller, when he came again he would repay.

The lawyer had to listen to this tale. And then he was asked—

"Which now of these three—the priest, the Levite,

or the Samaritan, was neighbour to him that fell among thieves?" He did not quite like to say the Samaritan; that would have been too hard a word for him to speak. But he said, "He that shewed mercy on him;" and then our Lord bade him go and do like the man whom he thought most meanly of, and whom he regarded as God's enemy.

Now let us think of this story. You see that the priest and the Levite knew the law, which was written in a book, perfectly. They had nothing to learn about that. The words of it rose at once to their lips; they could confound any one who disputed it. And yet when they were called to fulfil this law—when their neighbour lay on the ground needing their help, they did not remember it at all. It was a long way from them. They were to love their neighbour as themselves, no doubt. But who was their neighbour? Not this poor creature, though he was a Jew, a son of Abraham, an heir of the covenant. They owed him nothing; they were going on their own errands; what was he to them? That is to say, they had the law of love upon tables, but they had it not written on their hearts. They were serving God for hire; they could do things which they thought would profit them, and avoid things which they thought would injure them, but they did nothing because they had God's mind; they did nothing because they felt to men as He feels towards them.

But this Samaritan, though he had never studied the words of the law as they had; though he had not a

hundredth part of the blessings which belonged to them; though he had probably a great many mistakes and confusions in his head, from which they were free, had this law of love in his heart, and showed that he had; God had written it there. And, therefore, he did not ask whether this poor half-dead traveller by the roadside belonged to his village, or his town, or his country, or his religion. He had nothing to do with any of these questions, supposing there was any one able to answer them. This was his neighbour, for he was a man. That was quite enough, and therefore he at once did what his neighbour wanted, what he would have had another do to him.

Here was a lesson for the lawyer; one which he might be learning day by day, which would last him as long as he remained on earth, and long after that. If he would keep God's commandments, he must give up his pride as a lawyer, his pride as a Jew; he must become simply a man, just like this poor despised Samaritan. He must understand that God cared for men, and therefore he must care for them. He must ask God continually to show him how He cared for them, and to give to him that will, that spirit, which is in Himself, otherwise he would continue hard as the stones on which the commandments were written; otherwise he might have the highest reputation among men, and yet be abominable in the sight of God; otherwise he might be trying to win eternal life, and really be sinking deeper and deeper into death.

And now you will understand, I think, why the eyes and ears of the disciples, fishermen as they were, had a blessing which did not belong to all the great men and wise men that had been in the world before them. Some of those great and wise men had had this law proclaimed to them in direct words, and had seen it written in letters. But that was not enough for them. They knew it was to be obeyed; they felt they could not obey it while it was outside of them. They wanted to have it in them, and to be governed by it altogether. But the more they wanted this, the more they felt how unlike their mind was to God's mind; how short they fell of the love which was in Him, and which He wished to be in them. There were others who had never heard the law in words, or seen it in letters, yet God had written it in their hearts, and it had come forth in such acts as this of the good Samaritan; but they cried and sighed like the others over the selfishness which they found in themselves and in the world; they asked, 'When will God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven? when will there be one to do it perfectly?'

Both, therefore, those to whom the law came outwardly, and those to whom it came only within, cried for the same person. They cried for a Son of God who should show them what God's truth and charity is; they cried for a son of man who should show them how a man may be the perfect image of God; they cried for a king who should reign over their hearts, and make them like Himself. And now, says our Lord to His

disciples, 'Blessed are your eyes, for they see that Son of God who can show you what the Father is; that Son of Man who perfectly delights to do His Father's will, and to finish His work; that King who can govern you according to His pleasure. Blessed are your ears, for He is speaking to you, and commanding you.' Long afterwards they will have recollected how the lawyer's question, and our Lord's parable, came in just when they had been considering what their blessing was. And they will have said to themselves, 'Yes, truly, blessed are our eyes, for we have seen Him who has met with us all lying sick and wounded and half dead; who has gone about healing men and restoring them without asking whether they were His friends or His enemies, but caring for them all as His brethren. Blessed are our eyes, for we have seen Him who was called a Samaritan by the Jews; whom they despised, because He mixed with publicans and sinners; whom they cast out as a blasphemer. Blessed are our ears, for we have heard Him speak God's words; we have heard Him bid us go and do as He has done; and suffer as He has suffered. He has made us content to be called Samaritans, or worse names than that, if we can but pour oil and wine into the wounds of men that are perishing. Blessed are we, for we know what eternal life is now, since we have seen Jesus Christ, and have perceived what life there was in Him. This was the life which He received from the Father. This was the life which He has bestowed upon us. We are not to do

something great, that we may obtain it. He gives it us without money and without price. But when He has given it us, when He has poured His own Spirit upon us, it works within us. It stirs us up to act as if men were our own neighbours, our brethren as well as His.'

This was what the disciples thought long afterwards; but they did not think these things—they scarcely knew what our Lord meant—they never got the blessing which He said was theirs till He was gone out of their sight. Then it was, when He had ascended on high, that they began to feel who had been with them, and who was with them still; then they began to preach to all men, 'He is your king as well as ours, He is with you as well as with us; He has given us His Spirit, His life of love, He will give it to you.' Then they began to treat all men—Jews, Samaritans, heathen—as brethren; then they could say boldly to their hearers, "Go, and do you likewise." And, therefore, brethren, I say, you and I have all the blessing they had, and the only question is whether we will use it or cast it away. That is a very serious question indeed for us, one and all. It is a very serious one for us who are, like the Levites of the Jews, called to teach you about God's laws, and, like the priests, to lead you in your prayers, and to present the perfect sacrifice of Christ for you to God, and to direct you unto the witnesses of His love, and to bless you in Christ's name. For we may become just as tough and hard-

hearted as these Jewish priests and Levites became. If we are left to ourselves we shall be harder and colder than all people, because those who are in the habit of using holy words and doing holy acts, are more in danger of losing the sense of them, and becoming stupid and indifferent, as if they meant nothing, than those who are less familiar with them. It is a terrible fact but it is a fact. And, therefore, we must pray to God that He will not leave us to ourselves; that He will not let us sink down into hardness and carelessness about our fellow-creatures; that He will stir us up to think of them; that He will quicken us with His own Divine love; that He will make us true witnesses for Him by our acts as well as our words, and then what we say and what we do will not only be for ourselves, but for you. If we want to get eternal life for ourselves as the lawyer did, we shall not get it; if we are willing to receive it from Christ that others may share it with us, He will give it us abundantly, and then the very humblest of us will be able to go and do like the man whom we have heard of to-day. He was merely an ordinary person with very few advantages, as I have told you; people who thought highly of themselves thought meanly of him. But, because he had been taught to think of men as his brethren, the sons of one Father, he did an act which Christ owned. Christ said, 'That was my act; God himself inspired it.' And let each one of us say to himself, 'Christ the Son of God died and rose again for me, and for all who

dwell about me, for all my neighbours and kinsfolk, for every stranger that comes in my way, and for all sick and wounded people, and for all sinful people; Christ died and rose again for them, and He is their Lord and their brother as well as mine. And His will is to do them good; and His will is that we should work with Him to do them good, to raise them out of the dust, to heal their wounds, to give them rest. He commits them to us, and He will come again to see whether we have fulfilled our trust or not. And when He comes He will say—for he has told us so—"Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of my brethren, ye did it unto me."'

SERMON IV.

WAITING FOR CHRIST.

Preached at Clyro, 18th Sunday after Trinity, September 25, 1853.

"Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 CORINTHIANS i. 7, 8.

You have heard of people out on the hills at night who have been overtaken by a snowstorm and have lost the track by which they went up. You have heard of people—perhaps it may have happened to yourselves—who have been tossing all night on their beds in a fever. What do you think was the chief thought in the minds of both of them? It was surely this, 'Oh, that the sun would come forth! Oh, that he would not remain so long hidden from us! We know he is there. The morning must come; but oh, that it would break out now—that it would scatter this terrible darkness.'

These men know what it is to expect the coming forth of the sun,—what it is to long that he would lift up the veil that hides him from them. But we all do expect him, and wait for his rising. We should all be

miserable if we were told by some one we believed, 'He will not appear to-morrow.' That would not be a message of grief and horror only to people on the hills and to the sick. It would be a message of grief and horror to the whole earth. Nothing else could make up for it. There may be ten thousand beautiful things on the earth, but that would be gone which enables us to see their beauty. In a little time the beauty itself would all be withered and dead. Each man might have hoarded treasures of his own; but when the common sun was withdrawn, all his particular blessings would be worth nothing to him. He would find that he and his poorest neighbours were on a level, alike in misery and desolation.

What has this to do with the words of St. Paul? Much, I believe. He speaks to the Corinthians, one and all, as to men waiting for the coming or the unveiling of Christ. They bore Christ's name, they were signed with the sign of His cross; they believed Him to be the Source of Light, Peace, Healing, to them and to the whole world. Must they not then desire that He should be fully revealed to them and to the world? Must not that be the great hope of their hearts? Those who felt what confusion there was in their minds for want of His clear light, might long for it more than others; those that were sick at heart might long for His healing more than others. But would it not be a miserable thing to tell any man, 'He will not appear;' 'He will never be revealed'?

Brethren, I am sure this would be the most horrible news that any one could have brought to the Corinthians. I am sure it would be the most horrible news that I could bring to you. I will tell you first why I say this about them, then I will tell you why I say the same about you.

St. Paul had found the Corinthians in great darkness of mind, worshipping many different gods, of whom they had different fancies and notions, worshipping the Goddess of Pleasure above all. They had a dream of some God, some Father, some Friend; at times they fancied these gods to whom they were doing homage were likenesses of Him, His children to whom He had given power in various places and over various things.

But then it seemed to them that there was more evil than good in the world, and that these powers must oftener mean evil to them than good, and that He from whom they got their powers must be harder and sterner than they were, and must design worse and more terrible mischiefs to the creatures He had formed.

They knew that they had done wrong; they felt as if He who had the government of the world must mean to punish them for the wrong; they thought they must try hard to persuade Him not to punish them; the more they tried, the more hopeless they were of escaping.

St. Paul came to these men, saying, 'God, who created all things, hath sent forth His only begotten Son, the express image of His person, into this world

of ours, to deliver it, and them who dwell upon it, from the enemies which are tormenting it. You are not mistaken; the evils of the world are as great as you take them to be. They are about you, tormenting you every hour. You do need to be set free from them. And you are not mistaken that these evils, the very worst of them, come from yourselves. You have committed evil, the desires which led to this evil are in your hearts. And you are not mistaken that God is a righteous Being, and that all these evils are sins against Him. But because that is so, He hath sent His Son to set you free from these plagues above all others. While He was on earth He was freeing men from plagues of body, hunger, leprosy, palsy, fever, and their minds from plagues of rage and madness, and confusion.' All these, he said, were proofs that an evil spirit, a tyrant, had got dominion over men, and that they were acknowledging his dominion.

These things were not the will of His Father, they were contrary to His will. He came to do His Father's will by making His creatures straight and well, by breaking the yoke of the oppressor. And now, St. Paul said, He has proved Himself the conqueror. He died the death of the Cross. His love showed itself stronger than death. He rose from the dead, He ascended on high. He ascended, not because He was going to leave men or forget them, but that He might do good to the whole universe. Not merely to one here and one there; that He might be the king

over all; that He might send His Spirit into the hearts of men, to teach them of Him and of His Father; to make men who had hated each other brethren in Him: to reconcile all to His Father: to fill up the gulf that separated the world after death from the world before death; to bring all things into one.

The Corinthians had believed the Apostle's gospel; they had renounced their idols. They had been baptized into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; they met together to eat that bread and drink that wine which declared that they were members of one body in Christ, and that Love had triumphed over sin and death and hell. The more earnestly they believed this to be true, the more they found it true. They found that there was a love stronger than the evil that was in them, stronger than the evil that was in their brethren—one which could convert the most rebellious to itself. But still the world was full of misery. There was this tyranny of the Roman Empire established over the greatest part of it; in each particular country and neighbourhood there were crimes, divisions, oppressions.

Besides believing, then, the Corinthians had need to hope and to wait. What had they to hope and wait for? That He who had been declared to be the deliverer of the world—who had proved Himself so by dying for it—who was proving himself so in their hearts—would come forth, would declare Himself to be the King of kings and Lord of lords, would put down

the wrong, would establish the right. To work for this, to wait for this, the Apostle tells them, was the best thing possible for them, one and all. This kept their heads above water, when they had the strongest current against them, and they found it hardest to strive against it; this helped them to strive against the sin that most easily beset them; against their pride, and their divisions, and their distrusts. This kept them together, because one was not looking for this end, and another for that; but all had the same end before them. Christ was He whom all alike were expecting.

Now I compared this expectation to the looking out for the sun, which I said would certainly shine out in due time, however long the night might seem. But is not there a great difference? The Corinthians waited for Christ—were they not disappointed? Did He come as the sun comes, out of the dark night? After eighteen hundred years has He ever yet appeared? Brethren, the Corinthians were *not* disappointed? They found more, not less, than they looked for. He whom they believed to be the King of the world proved Himself to be the King of the world. The Jewish nation, which had said, "We will not have this man to reign over us," was broken in pieces. He who was rejected by it was He who had held it together, without Him it had no life. That breaking up of the nation was an unveiling of Jesus Christ—a clear manifestation of His dominion over men, of His presence in the midst of

them. It had been no cunningly-devised fable they had believed. He who was called the carpenter's son, He who suffered under Pontius Pilate as a malefactor, was the head of all principalities and powers. He was ruling amidst the powers of heaven and amidst the inhabitants of the earth.

But what, you may say, were the Corinthians the better for this? Did this knowledge save them from dying? Had they not to suffer just what their fathers had suffered before them? Had not some of them to bear even harder and more intolerable deaths than their fathers? Even so! Their threescore and ten years came to an end. Some of them breathed out their souls on their beds, some on crosses, some in the fire. They did not escape what the only-begotten Son had endured. And what then? They had learned who it is that governs in both worlds. They had learned that Christ is there as He is here. They had learned that as He is veiled from men here, there He is unveiled. They had learned that death is not a barrier which separates from Him, for He has borne it. They had learned all these lessons; and therefore could wait for the sun with perfect confidence that it would appear. They could be sure that if it shone on them, it would shine on multitudes besides. They could bid all people look for this universal sun. They could tell them that it was a miserable thing not to be expecting the light, and a miserable thing to be loving darkness, rather than light. They could encourage all to come

to the light, to walk in it, and live in it, that when it broke out in its full glory they might rejoice that now they had all which they had dreamed of, and waited for; all that was needful to make them thoroughly blessed.

II. So was it with the Corinthians. Why is it to be different with us? We are baptized, as they were, into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. We have heard, as they heard, that Christ is the great deliverer and king. We have had more proofs than they had that He is actually reigning in this country of ours. We have proofs of it in our own consciences. Every sin of which our heart condemns us, is a witness of a righteous Lord who is the enemy of sin. We have the witness of it in the world about us. Every event that has happened in any nation of the earth; any great judgment that has befallen it; any great deliverance that has been wrought for it, has been a day of the Lord, an appearing of Christ; a proof that He is in deed and not in name only our sovereign. If we do not receive it as such, the reason is that our eyes are darkened, that we do not see things as they are. The saints in light, who must perceive in whatever befell them on earth, in whatever befalls the kinsfolk and friends whom they have left behind, sure tokens that He is in the midst of us teaching, guiding, reproving, blessing us; they must wonder at their own blindness, that they did not confess this to be so always. And they must expect with confidence the full

revelation of the Son of God, to finish all that He has begun, to establish peace where there is war, and freedom where there is tyranny, and order where there is injustice and confusion. They are sure that He will work out all His purposes, that He will accomplish all His Father's will. 'How long, O Lord,' they cry; 'how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood? How long dost Thou wait before thus making the earth a place where men may dwell together in love, and where God may dwell with them, and be their God?'

And, oh, brethren, we sinners upon earth may join in that cry of theirs; we may join our hopes and longings with those of the men who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and are for ever before the Throne. 'What,' some of you may say, 'must not I who have so many dark thoughts in me, must not I tremble to meet my Lord? Can I desire to see Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire—who looketh into the thoughts and intents of the hearts—must not I shrink and quail, when He appears?' It is a good question. Would to God any of you are asking it in your hearts; then I could give you the answer, and it is this:—Be sure, brethren, that Christ will appear, and that every eye shall see Him; and that the thoughts of every heart will be made manifest before Him. There is no more doubt of that than there is that the sun will rise out of this coming night, and will make all things clear and plain that are hidden in the dark-

ness, or confused in the twilight. And if you have hidden thoughts that you do not wish to be revealed, seeing that they must be laid bare then, oh, let them be laid bare now! Christ's light is about you at this moment; you need not wait for that till another day; you may come to it, you may ask Him to scatter the darkness that is in you now. It is a miserable thing to have that within us which we are ashamed of; it becomes worse when Christ says, 'I will deliver you from it, I will take it out of you, I will give you a clean heart and a right spirit.' Well, then, I say: if you seek for this day by day; if you beg Christ to separate you from the evil that is in you, and to make you right, you are expecting Him; you are waiting for Him. And instead of looking at it as a thing to be dreaded that He should appear at last in His full glory, and put out this darkness in you altogether, that is the very thing of all others you must wish for; you can be content with nothing short of that. And let not any of us, dear brethren, be content with less than that, for Christ promises us no less; and our folly and our misery is, that we do not ask Him and trust Him to fulfil His promises. They exceed all that we can ask or can think. He is willing to make us pure; He is willing to make this earth pure. In a little time, when this world and its fashion have passed away from before our eyes, we shall find that it is so. We shall find that we had Him with us all through our pilgrimage; that He was every moment speaking to

us, and moving us to do right; every moment warning us of the wrong. We shall find that we erred in hoping not too much, but far, far too little! If we had hoped more, we should have been freer, and purer, and more loving. We have despaired of God's goodness, therefore it has been far from us.

But let us despair no longer. For the will of our Father in heaven is to do us good, to save us, to bring us to the knowledge of His truth. His will is that we should receive the blessings He has given us, and wait for the blessings He has in store for us.

SERMON V.

ST. PETER'S CONVERSION.

Preached at Clyro, 1853.

"The God of our Fathers raised up Jesus whom ye slew and hanged upon a tree; Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."—ACTS v. 30, 31.

THESE are the words of St. Peter. Do you remember some other words of his, when he was sitting with our Lord the night before His crucifixion? He said then, "Lord, I will go with thee to prison and to death." And Jesus answered, "Verily, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow twice till thou hast denied me thrice." As He spoke, so it came to pass. Jesus was standing before the judgment-seat. One and another person said to Peter, "Thou wast one of His disciples." "Did I not see thee in the garden with Him?" "Thou art a Galilean; thy speech betrayeth thee." But he said to each, "I know not what thou sayest," or, "I know not the man."

Some three or four months had passed away since

that time, and here is the same Peter. Those people before whom he was afraid to confess that he knew Christ were men-servants and maid-servants. Now he was before the rulers and elders of the Jews, the men whom he had been taught to fear as the greatest in his country, ever since he was a child. He had not often seen them, for they lived in the chief city of Judæa, and he had been brought up in the upper part of the land. Those who came from his country were despised by the South people, and he had passed his life as a fisherman on the lakes; yet hear how he answers a council of the most learned and powerful men in Jerusalem: "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted at His own right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things. So also is the Holy Ghost, which God hath given to them that obey Him."

You see the coward has become the bravest of men: he who could not acknowledge his dearest friend, when he had just been sitting and eating with Him, is ready indeed to go to prison and death for Him, now that he sees Him no more. How has this happened? What is the cause of this mighty change which has since come over him?

I believe it concerns us much to know, brethren; for we may find out secrets which have as much to do with us as with Simon Peter.

While St. Peter and the Apostles were walking day by day with Christ, seeing the wonders that He did, hearing Him utter parables to the people, asking Him in private to explain them, receiving power from Him to go and heal the sick themselves—while all this was going on, they felt as if they were His especial favourites, those whom He had chosen to receive blessings which other people had not. And He did not tell them they were wrong. On the contrary, He said He had chosen them to be His ministers, to sit and rule and judge with Him in His kingdom: and that kingdom, He said, was the kingdom of heaven, the one to which all others must bow. But He explained to them also, that He who was the chief in this kingdom had come to be the servant of all; and that if they reigned with Him, they must be servants too. They could not understand this. If they were the chosen companions of a king, must not they some day or other be admitted into a palace, and have servants to wait on them? Must they not look down upon those, who had looked down upon them? They thought it *must* be so; they often questioned among themselves which of them should have the choicest place—which of them should be the greatest, and sit nearest to the king. That dispute they were busy with even at the Last Supper, when He was saying, "One of you shall betray me;" and when His soul was troubled "even unto death." You will think, then, how they must have been upset and bewildered when they saw Him who was to

be a king Himself, and who was to make them kings, led out to be tried, and mocked, and crucified. You will think how their hopes must have withered up; they must have felt like men who had tumbled from a great height, and had not yet reached the bottom. It seemed as if they had been in a sleep ever since they left their father's ship, and had been dreaming a long dream, which had passed away when the morning came. No doubt Christ had told them often that He should be rejected by the chief priests and elders, and given up to the Romans and put to death. But they could not believe Him; they thought it was impossible, and they felt as little prepared for these events as if the words had never been spoken. They were not the least false men when they said they were sure they loved Him, and would cling to Him in life and death. They thought so in their very hearts; but they became utterly helpless and stupefied. Their strength was gone from them, so they all forsook Him; and he that was boldest, denied Him.

What could raise him out of this depth? First, we are told, "Peter went out and wept bitterly" for what he had done. Then he began to know more of Christ and of His power than he had ever known all the three years he had been with Him before. His heart had been fast bound; now it was loosened, and all the streams poured forth from it. Who had caused them to flow? When the cock crew "the Lord turned and looked upon him;" Peter felt how mighty He was then

when they were binding and scourging Him. Yes, he felt Him to be more mighty than when He was feeding five thousand, and saying to the winds, "Peace, be still!"

This, then, was the first step in Peter's change. He had had many good gifts before, but this one thing he had not had—a broken and contrite heart. He had thought highly of his Master, but he had thought more highly still of himself; that is to say, he thought of his Master chiefly for himself. He thought of what He would give him and do for him. How great a thing it was to be called by Him, and to be set above others, and to have such blessings in store for him afterwards. Now, he knew that he was good for nothing; all his proud fancies of what he was, and of what he might be, melted away together. He saw that as the earth is very warm and bright because the sun shines upon it, so his goodness had all come from Christ, and not from himself, and that if he was separated from Him he was the poorest wretch alive.

If this time of sorrow and darkness had not come first, the news which he heard afterwards from the women who went to the sepulchre on the third day—"Jesus Christ is risen"—would not have been the wonderful news it was. And, even when he heard it, and when he went himself to the tomb and saw the linen clothes and the napkin, he could not believe it. That Christ should die was amazing and terrible; but that He should rise—how could that be? Who could think

that something had taken place in their day which had never taken place since the creation of the world? The women must be mistaken. But Jesus himself stood among them, and said, "Peace be unto you." And it was not merely that He wished them peace; the peace really came to them. They felt that He was the giver of it. And when He showed them His hands and His side, they were sure that these were the signs and pledges of peace with God, and peace with each other. They were sure that He was the same now as He had been before His crucifixion, the same as He had been before He took flesh and dwelt amongst men.

They saw Him only now and then during the forty days after He rose from the dead. And when He had appeared to them for a little time, He again vanished away. It was a strange intercourse. Did not they sometimes long for the time to come back again when He was with them, journeying with them whole days and weeks? No; they were beginning to have such high thoughts of Him, that it was impossible for them to wish to recover that time.

He had known death; He had been in the dark world. They wondered that He could converse with them at all; that they could touch Him and eat with Him. They looked at Him, and touched Him, and yet doubted. He ascended on high out of their sight. How was it then? Was He not gone quite away from them? They did as He commanded. They waited in an upper room near the Temple at Jerusalem. There

they found He was nearer than He had ever been; and they were sure that He had some great work for them to do, and that in due time they should have power to do it.

The power came. The Spirit of God descended upon them as they were gathered together at a great feast of the Jews. They felt that this Spirit was master of their words and their thoughts. They spake with other tongues, as He gave them utterance. St. Peter stood forth before the multitude, and said that this Spirit was given as a sign and proof that Jesus whom they crucified was raised up to be a Prince and Saviour, and that by His strength they were to tell those who had rejected Him that He was their King. Those who heard were pricked in their hearts, and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do!" And three thousand were baptized in the name of Christ, as the Son of the Living God, and the Spirit of the Father and the Son came upon them.

Here, then, was the cause of the mighty change which came on Peter in those two or three months. He had thought of Jesus of Nazareth as his mighty friend and teacher; now he knew Him to be a *prince*, in the full meaning of the word. Not a person seated on a high throne, or in a great palace, that people could gaze at; but One who could rule and govern the thoughts of men's hearts; whose throne was over them; whose palace was in them. He knew that this was the way in which Christ had proved Himself a king over him,

when he had feared to confess Him, and when his heart had been tied and chained by his pride. He had laid him low; He had given him repentance; and now that He had left the world, and was exalted to His Father's right hand, it was that He might do for others what He had done for him. For now, instead of dreaming of Christ as one who favoured him more than others, he delighted to think that He was the Friend and Saviour of men; that he had taken their flesh and died their death. He entered into the mind of Christ. He began to see that it was His joy to do His Father's will, by breaking the bonds which held His creatures in slavery; that it was His joy not to exalt Himself, but to be abased; not to be the chief of all, but the servant of all. St. Peter understood that he was sitting and reigning with Christ when he was witnessing to men of His love for them and His dominion over them—when he was showing them by his own example what forgiveness there was in Him, and how He could turn those who had erred most, and grieved Him most, to Himself.

Why, then, should he fear chief priests and rulers? He was sent to tell them of One who was their king as well as his. He was sent to tell them of One who was their Saviour as well as his. He could not fear them, for he knew how much stronger Christ was than they were. He could not hate them, for he knew that Christ had died, and risen, and ascended on high, because He cared for His enemies. St. Peter had learnt that he was the most contemptible of all in himself; he had

learnt that he had the same evil nature with those chief priests and rulers who had put Christ to death; he had learnt that there was One who could subdue that evil nature in them and in him, who could rescue both from the evil spirit who had held them captive.

And now you see why I said the secret which concerned Peter, and which was made known to him, concerns us, and is declared to us in his words. He was a fisherman, as poor a man as any of you; he was a sinner, like each of us; he was an apostle—a herald of Christ's kingdom to all men. He speaks of Christ being raised up to give repentance to Israel, because he was addressing Israelites, rulers of Israel, those who had committed the heaviest of all crimes; and, therefore, there is not one syllable or letter of that message of his which is not intended for any man, everywhere. It was for the publicans, and harlots, and outcasts of the Jews; it was for the rich men, and scholars, and doctors. All wanted repentance; all wanted to have a right and true heart given to them, to have their proud and selfish heart broken down in them. St. Peter says, Christ is raised up on high that He may do this for them all; that He may give them repentance; and that He may send away their sins; may relieve them from that heavy burden. He does not say, 'If you will repent,' 'If you will put away your sins,' then such and such good things will come to you. But he says, the Son of God and Son of Man has died and risen and ascended, that you may be able to repent; that your sins and you

may be put asunder; that you may know they are your enemies, and that they have been vanquished.

And that is the good news which St. Peter preached, and which we are to preach to you. Repentance is far too hard a thing for man to accomplish; any man who has tried to repent knows that. But Christ is revealed as a prince over our hearts, to turn them according to God's good and gracious will. Our sins cling too close to us for you and me to tear them off. But Christ has claimed us for members of His body, that He may do that for us which we cannot do. Christ gives us His spirit that He may make us free, in spite of all our inclination to continue slaves of a cruel tyrant. Let us believe this, brethren. And then you will desire that same Holy Spirit, who, when He had converted Simon Peter, made him a witness to his brethren, and a strengthener of them, to give you power by your lips to declare to all you meet, that Christ is their prince and Saviour; that He has been raised from the dead to give them repentance and remission of sins.

SERMON VI.

THE SICK OF THE PALSY.

Preached at Welsh Hampton, 19th Sunday after Trinity, September 28, 1856.

"That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power upon earth to forgive sins; then saith He to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thine house."—ST. MATTHEW ix. 6.

You know to whom these words were spoken, and who spoke them. In the town of Capernaum there was a man whose limbs were palsied. He could not go himself to see if there was any one who could cure him. He was fixed to his bed. But his friends heard that Jesus, who had been absent, had returned to this town, and that He had healed many people who were sick of different diseases. They thought He would do something for this poor man, who belonged to His own neighbourhood. Four of them brought him on his bed. St. Luke says that there was such a crowd about the house that they could not come through the door, and therefore they let him down by the roof. They must have had great trust in the power of Jesus to do that. They must have had great trust that He

was willing to use His power for the good of a suffering man.

At first it appeared as if they had not gained their end. Jesus saw the bed. He took notice of the man who was stretched upon it. He spoke to him in a kindly affectionate voice. He called him "Son." But He said nothing about the palsy. He must have seen that the man could not move; that he was in pain; that he had no use of his limbs. Instead of setting this right, He said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

The friends who had brought him must have been surprised. That was not at all what they had looked for. There were some present—learned men who had come from the city of Jerusalem—who were not only surprised but shocked. This, they said, is a strange power, indeed, for a man to take to himself! Sins are offences against God. He only can forgive them and put them away. For any one who has a mortal body, who speaks with a human voice, to do that is blasphemy.

Well, this was the judgment of the bystanders. But what do you think the poor man felt about it himself? I suppose he wanted to recover his strength, and to be able to do as he had been used to do, as much as his friends. Do you think, then, he was disappointed, as most likely they were? No; he found that this person who spoke to him knew thoroughly what was the matter with him; that He saw into the very heart of him.

There was something in him which he could not tell any one of; which he could not explain to any doctor. There was a palsy upon him, upon his own very self, which was harder to bear than the palsy upon his limbs. He could not have described it, I am sure; he had felt it, but perhaps he had never thought about it till then. But Jesus had discovered it. He understood the man better than he understood himself. And when He said to him, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," the man became a free man. A secret chain which had been binding him was taken off from him; he could look up into the face of Jesus and be certain that He was the Deliverer.

But he lay on his bed still, apparently he was as helpless as before. But when the learned men from Jerusalem began to murmur that Jesus had taken God's power to Himself, Jesus spoke again. He said, "That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed and walk." And the man found that the Deliverer had not done a half work. He had had power over him altogether. The palsy was gone from his limbs as well as from his heart. He could do what he was bidden. He rose up in the presence of them all. And the people marvelled that God had given such power to a man.

And that is the point I want to speak to you of. We have gone through the story. Now let us consider the reason that Jesus gives us for what He did. I will

take each part of it separately, for it is the way to understand His words.

1st. You see He says that He healed the man "That you may know." It was not done only for his sake, though it was done for his sake. It was done for those who were sitting around, for those who were believing in Him, and for those who were disbelieving. All of them wanted to know whether the Son of Man had this power or no; whether he was a blasphemer, as the Scribes said, or whether he was speaking truth and acting truth. It was even for our sakes who are reading it here in this church to-day. You and I now just as much want to know whether the Son of Man has this power, as this palsied man did, or his friends, or the Scribes, or the people generally. If He had it not then He has it not now. If He had it then, He has it now. If they wanted that He should use it for them, we want that He should use it for us. So let us give heed.

He speaks of Himself, you see, as the *Son of Man*. What does that mean? Jesus was actually standing in that room in Capernaum in a body such as the people about him had; He spoke with such a voice as theirs. He looked in all respects like them. He was verily and indeed a man. And He showed that He was by knowing what was in man. He felt for this particular man. He understood what was going on in him. He knew the sin that was in him.

You will say, 'But was not He a man in some other way than we are men?' If you mean were there not

some things which belong to man that He had not, were there not some things in men which He did not enter into? I answer no; absolutely, no. He has everything which belongs to a man. He enters into everything which there is in every man. And that is the reason He is called the Son of Man. He is *The* Man; the Head Man, the King of Men. But if you go on to say, 'What! was there, indeed, sin in Him, then?' I answer, no, verily; for He would not have been able to understand every man, He would not be truly and perfectly a man if there had been. Sin is what separates us from each other. Sin is what prevents us from understanding each other. Sin is what every man hugs in himself, and which keeps him away from other people. The Son of Man had no sin, and therefore He felt for all, and cared for all. The Son of Man has no sin, therefore He feels for all and cares for all. But, as you see by the story I have read to you, the Son of Man can feel for men that have sin in them, all the more because He is without it; He knows what a burden it is, as we that have so much of it do not know. He cares to set men free from it, as we do not care.

Now, brethren, the great and blessed thing of all is to know and believe assuredly that He is such a Son of Man as this.

That was the message which Jesus brought to the poor people of Galilee and Judæa, to the fishermen and the publicans: He made them feel and understand

that there was a King of Men, a Lord of Men, who cared for them, for every one of them; who loved them, every one of them; who would deliver them, every one of them, from that which was separating him from his neighbour, and making him at war with himself. The Scribes and learned men did not believe this. They could not make it out. They had a notion of a God, a Being very far off from man, who punished their offences against Him, and sometimes, perhaps, might be persuaded to forgive them. But they did not know what was meant by a Son of Man. They did not think there was such a person. What was the consequence? They knew nothing of God, though they talked of Him and pretended to fear Him; they merely dreamed of Him; they made a God out of their own dark fancies and wicked thoughts. Jesus, the Son of Man, came to show us who the true God is. He came, as He said, from God, to do the works of God. He said that God was not a tyrant, but a Father; and that in Him they might see the Father. And it is in Him, brethren, that you and I must see the Father, and only in Him. If we try to think of God without thinking of the Son of Man, we shall get all astray, and suppose Him to be another Being altogether from what He is. But if we think what this Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God was, if we think that He is now what He was always, then we shall begin to know what God is; then we shall begin to know something of His goodness, and truth, and love; then we shall desire to be like Him,

and we shall believe that He would have us to be like Him. So take in well this thought of Jesus the Son of Man, and feed upon it, then you will understand what follows.

2. The Son of Man has *power* even to forgive sins. What power that must be! Think how it worked with this poor palsied man. He had been out, I daresay, in great storms. He had seen the lightning and heard the thunder. Was not there power there? Yes, but it had never come nigh to him. He had never felt that the thunder or the lightning were his lords, or that they could make him another man. But this Son of Man said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," and these words went down into the very heart of him. He was sure, 'These do come from my Lord and Master. He has found me. He is speaking to me now.' And remember, dear brethren, that is the power we need for ourselves. It is a power that can speak to us; that can get the mastery over our own selves. No other will do for us. And remember there is such a power near you and near me at every moment; it is the power of this Son of Man. It is the power of Him who is the true Lord of each one of us. The Son of Man did not exercise power over the palsied man by looking at him or touching him; He spoke to the heart within him. And every time that there comes any twinge in our consciences, every time that any one of us wakes up and says, 'I have been doing wrong,' His voice has been speaking to us; and every time that any one of

us has said, 'I will try to be a better and truer man,' His power has been used over us.

3. He goes on, "The Son of Man has power *on earth* to forgive sins." The Scribes thought that perhaps God would forgive men's sins after they left the earth, if they tried to please Him and make up with Him here. Many of us thus think. But our Lord speaks a different language; He does not speak of what is to be done hereafter, but of what is to be done here. It is on earth that our sins plague us and torment us, and plague and torment our neighbours; it is on earth we want to get quit of them. And, therefore, Christ's first word to this palsied man was, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee now." And that is a sign and pledge of what He had power to do, and will to do, for those who were on earth then, and for those who are on earth now.

4. But, then, mind what this word *Forgive* means.

Does it mean less than the Scribes thought it meant? less than men commonly think it means? No, verily, but a great deal more. The Scribes thought that if a man had committed a great many sins, God would perhaps pass them by, and not punish them, if certain sacrifices and offerings were made to Him. People now often say, 'Well, I am a little given to drinking; I am a little more covetous than I ought to be; I am not quite just and fair in all my dealings, but I do hope God will forgive me.' Yes! He is ready to do that. The Son of Man came from His Father to tell us so.

But He is not so hard and cruel a King and Friend as to forgive a man for being a drunkard, and to leave him a drunkard; to forgive a man for being covetous, and to leave him covetous. Why, is not a sot the most miserable wretch and slave? Is not his drink his lord and master? Does it not make him into the vilest thing? Is not the covetous man sold to his money? Does it not hold him in prison and put him to tortures every day? Do you think the Son of Man would leave us in such accursed bondage as that? No, to forgive means to *send away*. Sometimes we talk, you know, of remission of sins; that is just the same, is used in the same sense.

The Son of Man has power on earth, power over our spirits to remit or send away the sins which have made us captive. That is what He did for the man sick of the palsy. That is why we call Him a Redeemer.

5. Once more; He has power on earth to forgive *sins*. What sins? I can give but one answer—mine and yours. You do not know what evil habits I am most prone to, I do not know what you are most prone to. But whatever they are, the Son of Man has power on earth to break these habits in pieces—to send these sins away.

And, therefore, when it comes into the heart of any one of us to say, 'Well, I daresay I am bad, but I do not lie as that man, or cheat as that man does,' let us answer the devil who puts us upon that thought in this way: 'This evil of mine is my enemy, my

tyrant; so I will ask the Son of Man, who is near me at all times and all places, to set me free from that; then I will go and say to my neighbour, "Thou, too, hast a great Friend and Deliverer, who is able to send away thy sins from thee." For He is the Son of Man, the common Lord and Saviour of us all; and He is also with each one of us, and can say to each one of us as He said to the sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins be sent away from thee."'

Perhaps you think, 'But it came all at once to him, and for me to get rid of my bad habits is very slow work indeed.' No, brethren, it did not come all at once to him in the way you fancy. The discovery that he had a Friend who cared for him, who wished to do him good, in whom he might trust, *that* did come to him with a wonderful joy, that was the greatest deliverance he had ever known, that took the palsy from his heart. But all the time he lived afterwards he will have had a battle to fight with his sins; much more of a battle than he had ever fought before, and oftentimes I daresay he lost the recollection of his Friend—it seemed as if the Son of Man were gone. Then his old sins would become his masters again; he would feel that they were always at hand to overawe him. Nevertheless, the thing was true and certain; the Son of Man had been with him before he knew Him, and was with him when he forgot Him. And so it is with us. We are members of Christ's body. He is with every one of us. To believe that He is; to believe that we

have Him as our Helper and Deliverer; to believe that He is stronger than all the enemies that are mightiest within us, this is infinite comfort and joy; this assures us that the sin which seems so near us is really divided from us; that it is not our master; that we shall be able to trample it under foot. But, with us as with the palsied man, it must be a daily, hourly fight, to remember that Christ, the Son of Man, is our Master, and that the world, and the flesh, and the devil, are not our masters.

You will say, perhaps, 'But we have no tokens such as our Lord gave when He was on earth, that He forgives our sins.' Yes, brethren, we have all these tokens and very many besides. We have all these tokens; for when you read to-day how Christ healed the sick of the palsy eighteen hundred years ago, you may say boldly, 'That is a token to me of what He was, and is, and is to be always.' If that showed that He had power to send away sins from the Galileans, it shows the same just as much for the people of Shropshire. But you have other tokens. Every one that gets rid of any disease in your parish is raised out of it by the Son of Man. Every such recovery is a token that He has the power to put away sins as well as to put away diseases. And remember the sins which each of us commits affect our parish and our whole nation. We speak of national sins because sins destroy the nation. Now does not Christ give us tokens that He has power to put them away? I have asked you to

come and meet me here to-morrow to give thanks for the harvest. Do not you think that is such a token? Does it not say to us, 'The Son of Man who makes the seed to grow, and bring forth, and bud, can make all good seed spring up and grow, and bring forth fruit in our hearts—can destroy the weeds that choke and stifle them.' Again, I have asked you to come next Sunday to receive the bread and the wine which Christ blesses and feeds us with. Is not that a token that the Son of Man is with us; each of us and all of us? What is that but the feast of Forgiveness; the feast when we come confessing our sins against each other and against God, asking Him that we may forgive each other as He in Christ forgives us? Does not the Son of Man say to each of us there, 'These are the signs that I have power on earth to forgive sins. Go, therefore, in the strength of my body and blood which I have given for you, to serve with pure and humble hearts your Father and your brethren.'

SERMON VII.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST OF THE KING'S SON.

Preached at Welsh Hampton, 20th Sunday after Trinity, October 5, 1856.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son."—ST. MATTHEW xxii. 2.

IF I searched ever so far, I could find nothing fitter than the Gospel for to-day to tell us what the sacrament of the Lord's Supper means, and why you should receive it.

It is a marriage feast; it is the feast which the great King of earth and heaven makes to celebrate the marriage of His Son.

It is a feast to which most of those who were first bidden would not come. It is a feast to which God bids all from the highways and the hedges, ignorant people, sinful people.

It is a feast at which some present themselves without a marriage garment, who therefore are cast out.

Let us think of each of these things for a few minutes, brethren, and may God Himself enable us to understand His words.

First, then, it is a *marriage* feast. Men were scattered up and down this world. They spoke different languages; they had different customs; they

had rivalries and enmities with each other; it seemed as if they had come upon the earth to fight with each other. Yet they felt a continual drawing to each other, they could not live without each other, they must sell and buy from each other; some of them yearned to be friends. Men and women bound themselves to each other in wedlock. All found that they were sons and daughters, if they were not brothers and sisters. Men must have been made to be one. How comes it that they are so divided? Their consciences said there would not be this separation unless there were a deeper separation besides. We should not be quarrelling among ourselves, if we had not quarrelled with One who rules over us. I say men's consciences told them this, or rather God told it them through their consciences. And therefore they worked hard to bring about a reconciliation, a union, between themselves and the Being whom they felt they were at war with. They offered sacrifices; they were ready to give up their goods and their offspring too, if they could but make peace with Him. But they did not know with whom they were to make peace. They thought He was like themselves, and was to be won over as they won over those whom they had made their enemies. They did not know that it was a God of perfect love from whom they had separated themselves. They did not know that He was their Father. They did not know that He was seeking after them to bring them into reconciliation. They did not know that all their

yearning after Him was awakened by Himself. They did not know that He had kept them in fellowship with each other, that He had made them into families and nations. They did not know that all their discords came from resistance to Him. They did not know that He meant to gather them all into one.

This was the message which Jesus brought into the world. He said, 'He who rules over you is my Father. He has formed you in me. He has made you one in me. And now I am come to unite you all to myself. I have married your flesh and blood to myself; and that is that I may marry the spirits of you who have this flesh and blood to myself. For I tell you, you cannot live apart from me; your life flows into you from me.' And when He was going away, He gave bread to His disciples and said, "Take, eat, this is my flesh." He gave wine and said, "Drink, this is my blood. Do this in remembrance of me." That is to say, 'Do this in remembrance that I have married myself to your flesh and blood. Do this in remembrance that your spirits are united to me. Do this in remembrance that all your life flows into you from me. Do this because ye are married to me, and are one in me.'

2. Therefore you see that it is the feast of a marriage which God has made for His Son. When each of us said just now, "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;" each of us said, I believe that the Son of God is our husband; that God hath united Him to us. Thus I affirm that what He told the disciples about

themselves, is true about us. It must needs be so; for He did not take the flesh of St. Peter and St. John more than He took the flesh of you and me. He took the flesh and blood of man. He gave up that flesh and that blood upon the Cross. Therefore there is the same bond between Him and us, the same marriage between Him and us, that there was between Him and the disciples who sat with Him the night before He suffered. They were the witnesses whom He sent to tell us of it. And we have not more life in our spirits than they had; our life flows out of His life just as much as theirs did.

That is the reason we go on keeping the Lord's Supper in every parish of England. We know that none of us can live, that we cannot live for one hour apart from Christ, the Son of God. We know that He it is, and He only, who unites us to God, and unites us to each other. We know that if we forget Him, we forget that we are united to God, and are united to our brethren. We know that we are liable now, as much as we ever were, to be at strife. We know that when we have been at strife with each other, and have been doing wrong, there comes into our minds a sense of God's being our enemy, and that we act as if He were. We know that we shall then try, by all superstitious and wicked acts, to bring Him over to us just as the heathen did. We know that the only way to escape from doing that, is to remember the words He said, that He has reconciled us to Himself, that He may

make a marriage for us with His Son; that He has made peace with us in the flesh and blood which He took of the Virgin, which He offered on the cross. And how shall we own that message to be true? This, He says, is the simple way: Receive these tokens that the marriage is not to be made, but that it *is* made. Claim to be united to Me and to each other in Christ, as I declare that you are.

But those who were first called would not come. Why was that? Because they felt it was their glory to be separate from other men; because they had no real wish to be at one with God. The Jews had been called out by God, that in them all the families of the earth might be blessed; that by them God might testify to all of His goodness and truth. They thought that He had called them out to be a curse to all the families of the earth; they thought they were to tell all the families of the earth, God cares for us and not for you: the only chance for you is to adopt our customs, and become like us. Therefore their minds were wholly alienated from God; they did not enter into His purpose; they were doing all they could to defeat it. And when the Apostles of Christ testified to them, saying, 'What God said to your fathers by the prophets He would do, He has actually done. He has made a marriage with men in His Son. Come and rejoice with us that He has made peace with all. Come and bear this message with us unto all tribes and kindreds' —some of them said, 'Nonsense, what have we to do

with that; we have our farms and merchandise to look after; what do we want to be told of a Father of our spirits, and of our being reconciled to Him?' Others did not take it so easily; they did not laugh, but were furiously angry. They said, 'This is robbing us of our privileges; this is putting us on a level with other men.' So they brought the Apostles who bare these tidings before kings and rulers; they imprisoned them, stoned them, crucified them.

What came of it? These Jews had decried Him who bound them together. They had set at nought their king. Nothing could keep them at one. They became more and more divided. They tore each other in pieces. At last the day which had been foretold arrived. The Romans, so the Lord of all had appointed, destroyed them and their city. They became vagabonds on the face of the earth. So it was proved that the message was a true message. The King of Kings had made a marriage for His Son. It was a real feast which they had refused to partake of.

It is a feast to which God bids all sorts of people. That was the chief reason, as I told you, why the Jews spurned the invitation. They did not like it to be thought that all were the better for this marriage. They did not like to keep a feast at which publicans and sinners, yes, and heathen, were asked to sit down. In other words, they did not believe in the marriage at all. For if the Son of God has taken man's flesh and blood; if he is the Lord of men's spirits, there

is not a single human creature of any tribe or kindred who has not a share in the blessings of it. There is not one to whom we may not say, 'Your Lord and ours calls upon you to remember that He has taken your flesh and died for you. Come and give Him thanks that He has done so. Come and have fellowship with His Father and your Father.' If you say, 'But was not this marriage then made for the sake of righteous and holy people? Was it not with them that Christ united Himself?' I say, no, brethren. It is by claiming to be united with Christ that a man becomes righteous. Whilst he tries to be righteous in himself, whilst he wishes to be separate from his true Lord, he cannot be righteous.

If a son goes away from his father's house, and says he will have nothing more to do with his father or his mother, or with any of his brothers and sisters, and if his father or one of his brothers went to persuade him to come back, do you think the man ought to say, 'By-and-by, when I am very righteous and good, I will come back and make it up with you and live with you again.' How could he do that? How could he become right while he denied his birthright and his parents? Do you not see that the proof of his being better would be, to do what he was urged to do, to confess that he had a father, and that he was altogether wrong ever to have broken away from him? Well, the case is exactly the same here. No one can make himself right while he stands apart from his

Father in Heaven and his Elder Brother. The way to be right is to turn round to his Father and say, 'I have forgotten Thee, my heart has been far from Thee. And I should never have remembered Thee, or have wished to find Thee, or to be at peace with Thee at all, if Thou hadst not sent me word by Thy Son that I am Thy child, and that Thou wouldst have me call Thee my Father in Him. But as Thou hast sent me this word, as Thou hast said that He has come down and taken my flesh, and died on the cross in it, on purpose that He might bring me to Thee, I yield myself; I will fight with Thee no more; I will not be the fool I have been in setting up my bad will against Thy good will. I desire that Thou shouldest rule me henceforth, and shouldest take away all my ignorance and wilfulness from me.' That is what a person says who heeds this message, 'Come to the wedding-feast.' He does not the least pretend that he has any goodness of his own. It is because he feels that he has not, and that he cannot have, that he wants to be thoroughly joined to Him, in whom all goodness dwells. And since he cannot, poor creature and beggar as he is, join himself to the Great Prince of the whole earth; he is greatly astonished and rejoiced to hear that this great Prince has joined Himself to him; that He has stooped to the state of the very lowest of us, on purpose that the very lowest of us might receive forgiveness, and strength, and life, and all that he wants from Him.

So you see why our Lord speaks of sending out into the highways and hedges, and getting in all manner of guests. You see He could not say otherwise. For all these people are human beings, and Christ has not been ashamed to call them brethren, and he has proved that He is their Brother by dying their death; and it is a sin for anyone to cut himself off from God's great family in heaven and earth, and to remain at strife with those who belong to the same race with him; so surely all may be told that they need not and must not commit this sin, but may come and join with all the rest of their family in keeping the Marriage Supper of their Lord.

But, lastly, we hear of some coming there without a marriage garment, and being, therefore, thrust out. I have told you already what this wedding garment is not. It is not a man's own goodness, *that* God does not expect him to bring. What is it then? It is the goodness, and mercy, and love of God Himself. When He made that great marriage for His Son, when He united Him to our flesh and blood, He showed forth in Him all His own goodness, and love, and truth; as St. John wrote, *we* saw His glory as of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth. He showed it forth in Him, that we might say, This is what we want; this is what we have not in ourselves. When we say this in our hearts we begin to believe in God's love and righteousness, or, as the Scripture says, to *put our trust in Him*. So we become partakers of all these good things of

God, just as we take in the meres and the distant hills with our eyes, though they are so much greater than we are. But if a man will not trust in God's love and righteousness; if he does not think that God is loving and righteous; if he does not wish to be like God in His love and righteousness; if he had rather be just what he is in himself, then he will not put on the wedding garment which God has provided him, and God, who sees all of us that come to that feast, and reads the heart of each one of us, sees that we do not come there to seek Him; that we come there for some other end than that; for some low miserable end of our own; and so His light does not shine in on us; He leaves us in the darkness we have chosen; and we grow worse and worse, darker and darker, for having mocked Him and trifled with Him.

You say, 'That is very dreadful.' Surely it is. It is dreadful to distrust God who is all good, and to trust in ourselves in whom apart from God there is no good at all. It is dreadful to think highly of ourselves. If you think that, come to this feast that you may confess God's infinite goodness, which is manifested in His Son, His goodness in marrying that Son to our nature, that we might be clothed with His spotless garment of Justice and Love, come and own how empty you are that He may feed you with the food of eternal life. Depend upon it, He will send none away who desire that food. He will cast none into outer darkness who seek for His light.

SERMON VIII.

THE REDEMPTION OF THE BODY.

Preached at Welsh Hampton, 23rd Sunday after Trinity, October 26, 1856.

"For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour Jesus Christ. Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."—PHILIPPIANS iii. 20, 21.

ONCE upon a time St. Paul was imprisoned in the city of Philippi. He was thrown into prison because he had spoilt the gains of some enchanters by his preaching. They complained to the magistrates that he was exceedingly troubling their city, and teaching them customs which were not lawful for them to observe being Romans.

For Philippi was a Roman colony, and these people liked to be thought Romans. Now it so happened that St. Paul, too, was born in a Roman colony, and that his father, or some ancestor of his, had been made a citizen of Rome, and he succeeded to the honours. The magistrates of Philippi did not know this, or they would not have dared to seize him and put him into an inner dungeon, and set his feet in the stocks, as they did.

In the night, while St. Paul and his companions were singing praises to God, there was an earthquake, and the prison doors were burst open, and the jailer cried

out in fear, "What shall I do to be saved?" The next morning the magistrates were affrighted. They sent word to St. Paul that he might go out of the city quietly. But he refused to go. "They have beaten us openly," he said, "uncondemned, being Romans; and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out." And the magistrates did come. They became suitors to their own prisoners. When they knew that St. Paul was a Roman citizen, they were most anxious that he should not stand upon his rights and accuse them.

You see that the Apostle valued his privilege of being a citizen of the greatest city upon earth. The Philippians had reason to know that he valued it. He had made them understand by his conduct that citizenship is a great and honourable thing. Men are bound together as citizens of a city, as members of a nation, by God himself.

The heathens believed that every city had a God, who watched over it and saved it from going to ruin. They believed rightly; only they did not know that it is the same God of righteousness who watches over every city, and prevents its inhabitants from tearing each other to pieces by their selfishness and their enmities.

To be a citizen of Rome was a good thing, as it is a good thing to be a citizen of any English town or city, and a still better to be an Englishman.

But St. Paul tells the Philippians, in the words I have just read you, that he was the citizen of another

country too. "Our conversation," he says—that is the same thing as our citizenship—"is in heaven." What did he mean by that? He did not mean as I have showed you, that he was not a citizen on earth; he did not mean that he set little store by that citizenship; but he meant, 'Just as I belong to a very great society, consisting of all who have a right to call themselves citizens of Rome now, and of all who have called themselves citizens of Rome since it was built, just so do I belong to a still larger society than that, consisting of members which no man can number, out of every kindred, and tribe, and nation.' He described this society in another epistle as the family in heaven and earth of which God is the Father. He speaks of it as being all named with His name. Sometimes he calls this society "the body of Christ;" and he speaks of himself and his brethren as members of this body, as each having a separate work to do, just as our hands and feet have separate works to do; as all suffering together, just as we feel through our whole body a pain or wound in any part of it.

But you will say, he does not speak of heaven and earth; he only speaks of heaven. You are right, and this is the reason. He had been complaining of some persons in the Philippian Church, whose God was their belly, whose glory was their shame, who minded earthly things. Now, though these persons were members of that great society of which St. Paul speaks, they were not behaving as if they were members of it. They

were not thinking of others, they were thinking only of themselves. They were not looking up to God their Father, who had called them to be His children, or to Christ their elder brother, who had come to deliver them from their slavery to those things they saw and handled, and to give them His free spirit. They were bowing down to the things which they were meant to use and rule. They were becoming the slaves of those things; they were making gods of them; they were forgetting who had redeemed them to be true men; they were becoming like animals. 'Wherefore,' cries St. Paul, 'our citizenship, or conversation, is in heaven. We have friends and fellow-sufferers upon earth, our work is on earth; we live to do good to the earth. But our home is with God. He has bought us at a great price that we might be freemen of His kingdom, and might always fly to Him, and plead our cause before Him. He has made for us a new and living way into His presence through the flesh and blood of His Son, and we have a right to walk in that way, and not to be taking the downward way—the way of death.'

You will see what he says of the upward way in the other part of these verses.

What were these men who made gods of their bellies looking for? Perhaps on the next day for some rich food or some choice wines. But the day after? For the same, with less appetite to enjoy it. But the year following? For sickness and surfeiting; and then—for the grave! All this time they had been preparing food

for the worms. They had been fattening themselves for their nourishment. A hopeless kind of existence this, surely! No thought of anything bright, or good, or free, to come hereafter; no power of lifting themselves above the pleasures of the beasts—even the power of enjoying those pleasures growing less and less, and bitter pains always mixing with them and following them.

Meantime, what was St. Paul, the citizen of heaven, looking for? "We look," he says, "for the Saviour, Jesus Christ."

I spoke to you of this expectation last Sunday. I told you that just as St. Paul expected the sun to come out after each dark night, and to scatter the darkness, and to shine out clear and bright upon himself and upon the world, and to show everything as it is, so he expected the Saviour Jesus Christ to come forth in the glory of His Father and the holy angels. He believed that he should stand in the open presence of his Lord, and that every man on the earth would stand in the same presence.

This he looked for and waited for; this was the salvation he desired; for he was certain that there could be no other salvation for men but in the appearing of their true king and deliverer.

And St. Paul desired nothing for himself which he did not desire for all human beings; he did not think there could be a blessing for him which was not a blessing for them. The sight and knowledge of Jesus Christ is the blessedness of all men, and no man is able

to be satisfied with any blessedness which is lower than that. You will say, perhaps, 'All this is very well if we were angels, or if we had only got souls; but we have bodies; these men who made gods of their bellies might go too far in their respect for their bodies; but they did need something for them too; else why did God create bodies at all?' Now hearken, brethren. These men did not pay too much respect to their bodies; they paid too little. They did not know what mighty, glorious gifts these bodies were; if they had, they would not have destroyed their bodies by indulging them.

St. Paul had the greatest reverence for his own body, and for the bodies of his fellow-creatures, that any man could have. For he believed that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour, had taken a body such as ours, and had eaten earthly food, and had drunk of earthly water and wine; and had given that body to die upon the cross, and had raised it out of the grave, and had ascended with it to the right hand of His Father. Therefore when St. Paul recollected his citizenship in Heaven, when he claimed to be a member of Christ's body, and prayed in His name to His Father and our Father, he could not but think how this body, which is so curiously and wonderfully made, has a hidden glory in it, which, when Christ appears in His glory, shall be fully made manifest. Yes, he said to himself, this poor, vile body of mine, which is subjected to aches and pains of all kinds,

which is liable to accidents of weather, which may be set ajar by want of food, or by overmuch of it, this body which may be racked with fever or rheumatism, or palsy or consumption; this body upon the dust and corruption of which the worms must feed, shall be made like to that glorious body which my Lord has redeemed from the grave, and has gone up with into Heaven. Everything seems to be threatening it with death, but Christ, in whom is the fulness of life, has overcome death, and is stronger than death. He has raised up my spirit that was sinking lower and lower, to trust in Him and hope in Him. He will raise up this body too. Nothing shall be lost of all that God has given us, for Christ has redeemed it. Only death and corruption shall perish; for they have assaulted God's glorious handy works. What God has created, God will preserve.

Fathers and mothers, could you bear to look upon the children whom you have brought into this world, who will be exposed to such innumerable accidents and sicknesses, if you did not believe this? Do you not know that when you bring them to Holy Baptism, when you put them into Christ's hands, you ask Him to take care of their bodies as well as their spirits, to raise up both, to make both after His image? And do you think He is deceiving you? Do you think He will ever betray His trust? No. Commit them and commit yourselves to Him. In the darkest hours that come to you or to them, still look up to Him; still ask Him to strengthen you to wait for Him, to long for His appearing. If you do long for it, you who are poor

will be able to bear your poverty; you who have enough to eat and to enjoy will not make Gods of your bellies, or mind earthly things. You will be sure that there are better things than these which God has for us. In the assurance that there are, you will resist the temptation to make your bodies the slaves of lust. In the assurance that there are, you will not destroy bodies and souls both with drunkenness. You will remember that your bodies as well as your spirits have been bought with Christ's blood. You will remember that your bodies as well as your spirits are intended to be like His.

Are you determined that they shall not be like His? Are you determined to give them up to everything that is vile, and low, and accursed? Are you determined to give away to the devil what Christ, at such a price, has taken from him? Oh! do not so! Swear upon God's altar that you will not! Ask His strength hour by hour that you may not!

And then, whatever slow disease or sudden shock may show you that your bodies were made out of the earth, and must return to the earth, you may say boldly He is able to subdue all things to Himself.

As He raised His body out of the grave, He will raise mine. As He ascended with his body to Heaven, He will give mine power to use all the energies which He has given it, with no hindrance from earth or from death. As He will appear in the glory of His Father, He will enable me to shine forth with all His redeemed children in His Father's kingdom.

SERMON IX.

THE SPIRIT THE HELP TO PRAYER.

Preached at Ockham, 9th Sunday after Trinity, August 21, 1859.

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered."—ROMANS viii. 26.

You have been praying this prayer to-day: "Grant to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the spirit to think and to do always such things as be rightful; that we who cannot do anything that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Did you consider what you were asking for when you said these words? You were not asking for sunshine or rain, for food or raiment, to be stronger in body, or to have more money. You were asking the God of Heaven and Earth to give you His own Spirit; to give you the Spirit which dwelt in our Lord Jesus Christ; the Spirit which urged Him to go about doing good

when He was upon earth; the Spirit by which He offered Himself to God upon the cross; the Spirit who raised Him from the dead; the Spirit in whom He and the Father have been united before the worlds were, and will be united for ever.

It was a mighty petition. How did we dare to offer it? God Himself can give us no greater gift. What have we done to deserve it? Look at the Collect again and see: "We who cannot do anything that is good without Thee." We confess that we cannot stand before God and say we have done any good things which can entitle us to this blessing, or to any blessing at Thy Hands. We say plainly, if we are to be good, Thou must make us good; if we are to do any right thing, Thou must enable us to do that right thing. Without Thee we shall do wrong things. Nay, without Thee we cannot even think right things. These thoughts of ours will all go awry. They will be vain and silly; they will be full of mischief. We shall have bad devices in our hearts, and the bad devices will turn into bad deeds. And because we have had so many of these bad thoughts, and because we have done so many bad deeds—because we are helpless and sinful—because we feel that we are, and every day makes us feel it more, therefore we ask this of Thee, which is more than food and raiment, than sun and rain, than health and wealth; therefore we ask Thee to grant us this Divine Spirit—Thine own Spirit.

The more we look into this prayer, the more won-

derful it seems. What could an angel in Heaven wish for more than that he should be like God—that he should have the very heart and mind of God in Heaven? And yet here we are asking it because we are so little like angels—because we are continually tempted to break God's commandments—because we have broken them—because all sorts of vile desires come into our minds—because we find it so very hard to get any better desires into them.

Yes! that is the way we are taught and trained to say this prayer. We find out how inclined we are to be unkind, unclean, unjust, untrue; we look hither and thither for help. We try if no one can tell us what we ought to do, and how we are to do it.

Many are ready with their advice, and often we would give the world to follow it. But they cannot make us follow it; they cannot get down into the heart of us and mould and fashion that. Our thoughts go on taking their own course; whatever good words we hear, the words seem as if they could not catch these thoughts—they run so fast, and in all strange zigzag ways. We want some one who can overlook them—who knows them all, yours and mine; and the man's who is at the other side of the globe. And He who is able to do that—who can enter into all the thoughts of men everywhere, who knows them, who can guide them, who can turn them from bad to good, from darkness to light, from false to true, He must be the Spirit of the living God. For that Spirit we dare to ask, because we

are sure that God does not wish us to be disorderly, miserable, evil creatures, and yet we are sure it will come to that if He does not take the government over us and enable us to live according to His will.

But though we find out how much we need this Spirit, and how little any other can help us in our straits, we might still think it was only a few people here and there who could ever hope to win such a blessing. People have had that belief, and they have it still. They have said to themselves, 'These ministers, who preach to us and give us God's sacraments, they may receive this Spirit of God, or men who have got some new and rare wisdom or can tell us about some better way of being religious than our fathers have told us, they may have it; all we poor, common people can do, is to listen to what these ministers or these wise people say, and to get some crumbs that fall from their tables.' It would be very natural for you to say these words, and I am afraid that we should be wicked enough to be pleased with you for saying them, and to boast that we were greater favourites with the Father of all than you are. But mark how the last words of the prayer mock this insolence and vanity of ours; how they teach us that the Spirit is for you as much as for us, "through Jesus Christ our Lord"—through Him, who took upon Him the nature of us all—through Him, who was called the carpenter's son—through Him, who ate and drank with publicans and sinners—through Him, who preached the Gospel to the poor—through Him, who died for all

men—through Him who rose again for all men—through Him, who ascended on high, to be the Advocate of all before His Father—through Him who sent His Apostles to tell all that they are the children of God in Him—through Him, who came into the world that He might baptize men with His Spirit. Do you not see that this language would be a mockery and a lie if we dared to set up any pretension for ourselves which would separate us from any one of you? What we are sent to testify is, that the highest gift of God is that which is for all alike. We need the Spirit of God for the works we have to do. We can speak no true, honest, sound word, unless we ask Him to teach us what we shall say, and how we shall say it. But, most of all, we need His help to take the conceit and self-sufficiency out of us—to make us understand that we can of ourselves make you do no right deed, and think no right thought; that we cannot of ourselves do any right deed, or think any right thought; that we are all on a level—all feeble, and paltry, and sinful, without God; all redeemed and purchased by Him; all able to live according to His will, if His own Spirit, as He promises, worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

I have been speaking to you so far about the Collect because I wished you to use it as if its words were true, mighty, blessed words, such as I take them to be, and that you should not merely repeat them as if they meant nothing. But I should not have spoken to you of anything in the Prayer Book, if I did not think its

lessons were in the Bible, and if they did not send you back to the Bible, where you will find them more bright, clear, and full. The passage I have taken out of the Epistle to the Romans tells us something more even than the Collect. We need to *know* it, if this Collect, or any of the Collects, is to do us real lasting good. We often say in our hearts—I have said it to myself a thousand times—yes! we might have this Spirit of God, if we could pray for such a gift. But I do not feel that I can. My tongue seems tied, or what is worse, I speak readily enough; but there is nothing in my heart that answers to the speech, as a poor miserable king, who had murdered his brother, said, after he had tried to say a prayer:

> "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below,
> Words, without thoughts, never to heaven go."

Now, brethren, what is the way out of this perplexity for you, and me, and all of us? What are we to do when we feel as if we could not pray? as if that were the greatest difficulty of all. Hear what St. Paul says, for he had suffered in this way, as in most other ways—that was his training to be an Apostle:—"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered." So you see it is the Spirit who helps us not only to think and to do, but also to pray—who draws out our desires towards God, who speaks more

for us and in us than we know. It is very wonderful, but yet it must be so. We could not pray if God Himself were not stirring up prayer in us. It is not we who seek first for fellowship with Him, He seeks to have fellowship with us. The children begin to ask for their Father, because the Father has been first seeking for His children. That is what our Lord is teaching us in such a number of passages. It was, as I may say, the ground of all His teaching. The Pharisees complained of His keeping company with sinners. Nay, He said, but what does a shepherd do who has lost a sheep out of his fold? What does a woman do who has lost a piece of money? What does a father do whose child has wandered away from him? Whatever these do, He said, *that* your Father in Heaven is doing for His sheep that are running into the pits and falling over precipices—for the hearts that He has lost—for the children that are forgetting themselves and Him. And He said that He was come to do His Father's will, which was, that all should come to the knowledge of their true state and should live. Be sure, then, brethren, that when we are able to ask for God's Spirit to help us, it is because He is seeking after us, and prompting that wish of ours, and stirring us up that it may not be a lazy half-wish, but a real, strong, earnest cry. Be sure that when we feel as if we needed to pray, but cannot, God's Spirit is teaching us our weakness, and His strength; how much more He cares for us than we care for Him; how impossible it is for us to be right, or to be at peace,

till we believe in Him and yield to Him. Be sure that these deep longings, which there are in all of us, even in those who are going most wrong, are the groanings of that Spirit whom we have grieved and resisted. Be sure that He speaks to our true, better mind; that the other mind, which is contrary to His, is a false, accursed, devilish one, which we may ask Him to cast out. And oh! is it not a blessed thought that this Spirit is uttering His groans for the deliverance of this world of ours from all its sin and slavery and wretchedness? Should not we rejoice that God knows what is the mind of this Spirit; for it is His own mind? Should not we confess that all the evil that there is in us, and in all men, comes from our fighting against that gracious mind of the Father and of the Son? Should not we trust, with all our hearts, that His will should at last be done on earth as it is in Heaven? And do not think that those who have prayed that prayer here on earth, pray it less fervently when they leave the earth. Then their tongues are loosed; then they can pray for us and all their friends fighting here below, as God's Spirit would have them pray; then they begin to know that no prayer, or groan, that has been uttered in the lowliest chamber, or in the darkest dungeon, shall be in vain. God's Spirit inspired those prayers and groans, and His new Heaven and new Earth will be the answer to them.

SERMON X.

THE LAW OF INHERITANCE.

Preached at Ockham, 10th Sunday after Trinity, August 28, 1859.

"Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."—EXODUS xx. 12.

I AM going to speak to you this afternoon of one of the Commandments. Some people tell us that the Commandments generally do not concern us, they belonged to the Old Dispensation. Some say that it is a great bondage to impose them upon Englishmen who live under the Gospel. Some say that this Commandment, especially, is not meant for us, however good it may be in itself, because it speaks of a land which the Lord gave the Jews, and we are not dwellers in that land. I shall not argue against these opinions. I wish to try what they are worth in one instance.

The Israelites were travelling from the land of Egypt, in which they had been bondsmen, to a land which had been promised them. They were told that the Canaanites who occupied that land had become filthy and brutal—the cup of their iniquity was full. They had fancied that the land was their own, to do what they liked with

it. They did not acknowledge that they were set in it to till it and dress it. They did not acknowledge that there was any one who would call them to account if they misused it, and became plagues to each other and to mankind. The Israelites were taught that men were only tenants of the soil on which they dwell. It was bestowed on them for certain uses. If they forget these uses they will be turned out of it. The Canaanites were to be cast out of this land because the true owner of it had found them mischievous and corrupt. The Israelites were to succeed them. These Israelites were never to fancy, as the Canaanites had done, that it was their land. They were always to recollect that they were only husbandmen, set by the Great Landlord to watch over it for Him. They were to count it as a great blessing to have this stewardship entrusted to them. And they were to ask very earnestly, What was it that caused these people not to live longer in the land? The same wrong doings would lead to the same result. There was no favouritism. They were there to be witnesses of a truth—to do a work. If they were not witnesses of this truth, if they failed to do this work, they would perish off the land; others would dispossess them. What was it, then, this people had done which had taken the land from them? The great answer to the question is given in the first and second Commandments. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not worship the likeness of anything in heaven or earth

or under the earth." The Canaanites had not worshipped a God who makes free. They had worshipped gods who are tyrants, who make slaves. They had worshipped gods whom they dreaded and hated. They had supposed these gods to bear the likenesses of things in heaven and earth and under the earth. They had stooped and crouched to these things. Some of the objects were noble and glorious; but worship had degraded them. For men thought of them only as they ministered to their wants, or awakened their fears; so they became different in each land. It was impossible to think of them as blessings common to the whole earth. And if they were thought of only as ministering to men's wants, men would glorify all things whatever which ministered to their wants. The lowest animal might be as much an object of reverence as the sun or moon.

And here was the mighty contradiction. The men felt they were greater than the greatest of these things, whilst they were bowing down to them. They could not help thinking so. They wanted a God to govern them; to tell them what they should be and what they should do; to hold them in fellowship with each other. The sun and moon could not do this, nor the animals. They could not teach them to keep their oaths; they could not teach them to work or to rest; they could not tell them when they should make their children or their servants work and rest. Here were some of the causes why these Canaanites were living in slavery, and why they were to be driven from the land.

The fifth Commandment gives another reason. When Ham exposed his father's nakedness, it was said, "Servants of servants shall his children be." That is to say, Ham's own sin of not honouring his father will be the curse not only of him, but of future generations. Wherever there is a race of people who do not honour their parents, there will be a race of slavish people; this cannot be otherwise. And this, I have no doubt, was a main cause of the brutality and slavery of these Canaanites, inseparable from that of which I have just spoken. They did not revere the father who had begotten them, or the mother who had brought them forth. The child had no thought of its parents; perhaps scarcely knew who they were. The parents had no thought of their children. When it came to this in that or any country of the old world, the inhabitants of that country were becoming curses to themselves and to all about them. The land was taken from them. If we believe the Bible, we shall believe that God took it from them.

You see, then, why it is said here, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." That is as much as to say, 'You Israelites must not fancy that your days in that land which I am about to give you will be longer than those of the Canaanites, if you do not honour your fathers and mothers; for it cannot be so. By my everlasting law it cannot. I have placed you in families. I have given you fathers and mothers. And I have created you sons and daughters to look up

to them and pay them reverence. And if that reverence departs from you, if you do not care for the family to which you belong, then you will not care for the land to which you belong. You will not love it and fight for it. You will not think it a sacred place because it has the tombs of those who went before you in it. You will not call it your home, and wish to come back to it whenever you wander. You will not believe that you have anything to do with the generations that lived here of old, and with those that shall be born when you are in your graves. You will be mere miserable creatures, thinking only of the present hour, how much you can get to eat and to drink, or how much you can scrape together. And then, be sure, there will creep over you idleness and cowardice, and any invader that comes upon you will be too mighty for you and will eat you up.'

And this, which was said to the whole people, was, you see, said to each one of them. Each man there had his own father and mother. Each was to honour his father and his mother; otherwise he would become a poor vagabond. Either he would run away from his land, just because he was tired of it, or, if he stayed in it, he would be a useless sot or gambler, caring for no one but himself; always trying to please himself—his own enemy and his country's enemy.

And yet how many temptations did the Israelite find when he came into the land which the Lord God gave him, not to honour his father and mother! How often the evil spirit will have whispered to him, 'How they

grudge you this or that thing, how unfair they are to you! How much wiser you are than they are! How can you be such a feeble creature as to care for what they say to you? Surely you know best what you have need of?' All these things they heard, and some of them were partly true. The fathers and mothers might be often unfair and foolish; they might neglect their children; very likely they might, in their youth, have not reverenced *their* parents. So that the young man would frequently persuade himself that he had the right on his side. And except he believed that the Lord his God had said amongst thunders and lightnings to his fathers, and was saying then to him, "Honour thy father and thy mother," and unless he believed that the Lord who spoke these words was indeed his God as well as his father's God, and unless He believed that this God knew what was good for him and for all men, and was commanding the thing that was right and true; and unless he believed that this God would give him strength to obey that which He commanded, he would yield continually to his evil nature; no fear of what was coming upon him would keep him from doing so, his anger and his self-will would be too strong for that. But the words would be fulfilled to him. His days would not be long in the land which the Lord his God gave him. And if there were a great multitude like him, they would hasten the time when the whole land should be desolate.

My friends! do these things belong to the history

of the old world, to what people call a former dispensation? I hold that they belong to us, I hold it to be just as true of England as it was of Judæa, that it is a land which the Lord our God has given us. It is not ours, any more than the land of Canaan was the Israelites'. We are tenants of it, just as they were. Our forefathers understood that they were to till it and subdue it for God, and to drive wild beasts out of it, and to root out the thorns and thistles, and to hand it down better than they found it, to their children and their children's children.

Whilst we remember this, every one of us, if he has not a foot of land that he calls his own, may yet say, 'I hold this land of God; I have a share of it; yes, and in all the good things that have been done, and in all the brave and good men that have dwelt upon it.' It is not more the rich man's than the poor man's. All who walk upon it, and breathe the air, and look up to the sun may say, 'It is my inheritance.' And this is the tie by which the Lord our God has bound us to it, and given us a property in it. Our fathers and mothers belonged to it, as their fathers and mothers did, and while we reverence them, while we count it a great and wonderful thing to have had them to watch over us, and a great and wonderful thing that we should be allowed to care for them, then every one of us may feel that his days are indeed very long in this country. Yes, for they are not bounded by our birth nor by our death either. The country had

people in it who belonged to us before we came into it; it will have those belonging to us when we have gone out of it. And that is a pledge and assurance that our ancestors are concerned in all its blessings and sorrows wherever they are, and that we shall be concerned in its blessings and sorrows wherever we go. For it is the Lord God who is, and was, and is to come; who has watched over our family, and will watch over those who shall come hereafter.

But then, dear friends, we, too, have the very same temptations which the Jews had. Some are tempted not to honour their fathers on one ground, some on another; some have tolerable excuses for their sin; some have very poor excuses. Some honour their fathers and not their mothers, or their mothers and not their fathers. Some scarcely know what honouring means; they can only think of themselves and their own importance. And oh! brethren, how bitter is the anguish of recollecting that the honour has not been rendered, and that the time for it is gone; their gray hairs are in the dust; they want no more the services that were withheld, the reverence and the love which were refused them. It is an awful thought, and yet God may use it for bringing us to deep repentance before Him, for leading us to arise and go to that Father whose Spirit we have grieved whenever we have grieved our parents upon earth. And that is what Christ bids us remember. It is this Father, the Lord our God, the Father who gave up His only begotten

Son for us all; the Father who loves and honours that Son, and is loved and honoured by Him, world without end, for one Spirit of love binds them for ever and ever; it is He who says to us, in that still small voice which made the prophet tremble more than the thunder, and the earthquake, and the fire, "Honour thy father and thy mother." He has set over thee a father to remind thee of His justice and truth, a mother to remind thee of His mercy and gentleness. Oh, ask for His Spirit, that thou mayest honour thy father and mother as He would have thee honour Him. Do not let their waywardness, their weakness, or even their sins towards thee, check this, which He who has no waywardness, or weakness, or sin, asks of thee, and would put within thee. Receive it and cherish it as His own gift, which it is the highest good to have, and the greatest calamity to want! Count the commandment which He gives thee to be thy life. So out of the earthly honour there will spring one that is eternal. The vision of the perfect Father, and the joy and blessedness of being His child, will dawn upon thee more and more. And with the higher blessing will come a greater enjoyment and appreciation of the lower. Thou wilt know more of the mystery and wonder of belonging to a family, more of the mystery and wonder of belonging to a nation. Thou wilt see how the prosperity of England is linked to the prosperity of every English hearth and home, how one will be sound and safe as long as the other is sound and safe.

My friends! this may be obsolete teaching in the opinion of wise people. The writers of our Catechism did not think it so. Those who wrote the Communion Service did not think so. They believed that the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob is our God; that the God who delivered the Israelites and gave them their land is our God. They believed that He has promised in His new covenant to write His laws in our hearts by His Spirit. And I believe that thunders and lightnings as terrible as those which confirmed the commandment on Sinai, will show us that they were not mistaken. We may talk of refinement and civilisation as much as we will, but if these old words do not stand as the words of a living God, we shall sink back into barbarism. We may talk of national prosperity as we will, but if children do not honour their parents, no contrivances of statesmen, no commercial successes, no religious profession, will keep us on the land which God has given us. We may talk of free institutions as we will, but if the ground of freedom be cut from under our feet, the oldest of all curses will be fulfilled in us, "Servants of servants shall they be."

SERMON XI.

THE DELIVERER FROM CRIME.

Preached at Ockham, 11th Sunday after Trinity, September 4, 1859.

"Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery."
EXODUS xx. 13, 14.

LET me remind you once more how these commandments begin. "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the house of bondage." The Israelite was to hear those words spoken in his ears before each of these sentences:—I, the Lord thy God, thy Deliverer, say to thee, thou shalt not kill; I, the Lord thy God, thy Deliverer, say to thee, thou shalt not commit adultery.

And let me remind you also once again, that the self-same God, who is, and was, and is to come—He who is our God, and has chosen us to be His people—He who has redeemed us from the service of evil and cruel gods—He who is our Father, and has made us His children—is speaking to us just what He spoke to the Israelites.

The commandments are written in a book, but He is saying them to the heart and soul of every man and woman and child, who cannot even read the letters of the book.

Consider that. Every Englishman knows that it is against the laws of his country to commit murder. He knows that if he does commit it and is found out, he shall be put to death, or be shut up in prison and set to hard labour. And yet murders are committed—dark, foul murders—in our land, by men born and brought up like ourselves, breathing this air, nursed upon the knees of mothers who have had good thoughts in them, who perhaps have done kind deeds. The fear of the law is not enough to stop them; for they say, we shall not be found out. The deed can be done in some out-of-the-way field or wood. The body can be hidden in the ground, or we may choose a secret way of murder, we can use slow poison that even wise people may not understand the working of. Being punished hereafter may sometimes come into their minds; but that hereafter seems a long way off, and who can tell what may happen in the mean time? And so the man broods over this thought of a murder, and at last it gets ripe in his mind, and he does it, and the papers are filled with the news of it. And people read of it, and talk of it, and are not generally much the better for what they read and what they talk. But now, supposing that murderer had believed what the Bible says to us. Suppose he had understood that

the Lord his God was saying to him then—just when the deed was going to be done, just when he was purposing it and plotting, just when he was trying the knife or the poison—'Thou shalt not do it! No one else knows what thou art after, but I know it. No one else may follow thee in all thy contrivances, but I shall follow thee. No one else may be able to tell where the body has been buried, or how the drugs have been mixed, but I shall see it all.' Would that have made no difference? Would it have been nothing to him that he was going to part from a friend, to separate from one who had been with him, and watching over him in all his doings? I ask you, if the man had believed this, would it not have stopped him; though the fear of being hanged would not stop him; though the fear of what should happen to him after death could not stop him? Yes, brethren, that was just what he wanted; that was just what he did not believe, what very likely he never believed. He comes to know afterwards that it is so. There is a blankness and dreariness and dread in his heart, as if he had lost something; not an enemy—not the man he had taken so much pains to get rid of—but a well-wisher, One who cared for him, One who had kept him from a thousand wrong deeds before. He is at war, and he sometimes feels that he is at war with the Lord his God. He wishes that he could kill that thought, ay, that he could kill God. It is that he has been trying to do, and a man may come to the state when he shall

think that he has done it; and this state is more miserable and horrible than any other.

But what is the use of troubling ourselves about what unhappy murderers might have believed, and did not believe? This is the use of it, brethren, you and I may believe it. You and I may think this commandment is true and not a lie. The Lord our God, our Father, is always with us; knowing our acts, knowing our thoughts and wishes, knowing all the secret influences that may be working in us to do any evil deed. And He has the will to keep us from it. And He has the will to take away the dark, horrible imaginations that lead to it. He has the will to drive them clean and clear out of us, and to put right and blessed and loving thoughts and purposes in the place of them. As our Lord was telling us in the lesson we read this morning, in the Sermon He preached on the Mount, He is calling us to account for the first rising of anger in our heart; He calls us into judgment for the bitter curse that goes out of our lips. He makes us feel what a hell-fire we have kindled in our hearts, when we begin to scorn our brother and call him fool! Yes, all that is verily so. Christ is Himself speaking in our consciences, and accusing us of bad thoughts and words, long before they start into bad deeds. He begins at the beginning. Is not that good for us to remember, for us who have the same nature with the murderer, for us who may be tempted sometimes as he is tempted; for us who may be cherishing a cruel and

67770

savage hatred of some fellow-creature, even if we are kept from hurting his body?

And what I have said of this commandment, is just as true of the next. In the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord speaks of that as well as of the words, "Thou shalt not kill." He speaks of the secret lusts which work in a man's heart before he dares to defy the law, and defile his neighbour's wife. He says to every one of us: thou canst not hide from me the deed of darkness, though no mortal may be acquainted with it—thou canst not hide from me all the secret desires that are leading thee to ruin another and thyself—thou canst not make excuses with me. I know thy temptations, but I can give thee the victory over them. I can save thee from destroying the soul of one thou pretendest to love, the peace of a family, thy own truth. The dread of being detected and exposed may not hold thee back in thy evil way; but I can. Here, again, I say, the adulterer and adulteress sin, because they do not believe this. It seems to them an idle tale. But they know afterwards that it is not an idle tale. There comes to them, as there does to the murderer, the certainty that they have lost something that was infinitely precious. They have set themselves at war, not with the world and with men, but with the living and true and loving God. The misery that awaits them is not when people are looking on and scorning them; they might bear that; they might comfort themselves with the thought, 'perhaps if they

had been in our circumstances they would not have been better.'

But it is in lonely hours, when no one is condemning them, when they are trying to find comfort in each other, or to look back upon the days of their childhood, or to hope for better hours—it is then that some voice speaks to them, and says: you have sold your birthright; you would not have a Father. You did not let His Spirit govern you; you have given yourselves to an evil spirit.

Brethren, there are very sad and fearful thoughts connected with these commandments. But there are also very blessed thoughts connected with them. Is it nothing to remember that the Lord God Himself watches over the life of every one of us, poor creatures as we are? that He has declared and does declare how precious it is in his eyes? 'I say to thee, poor man and rich man, beggar and king, "Thou shalt not kill." I say to the man with the strongest arm, with the greatest dominion over his fellow-creatures — that strength is mine; that dominion is lent thee by me, to defend life not to take it away. And if thou usest it for the wrong purpose instead of the right one; if thy strength become a plague and a destruction to thy fellow-men, though none of them may call thee to account for it, I shall call thee to account for it. Thou wilt answer to me for every drop of this sacred life which thou spillest; of every man's brother will I require the life of man.' And thus, too, we come to

understand better what God's promises are concerning this life of ours. It is subject to a thousand accidents. All things seem to conspire against it. Death seems to get the mastery over it at last. But no, He has said, 'Death, I will be thy plague.' As every plant and tree seems to die in winter and to revive in spring, so He says to this more wonderful life in our bodies: 'It shall go on, and this is the pledge and witness that it shall. The head of you all, the Son of Man, the only-begotten heavenly Son of God, died Himself and rose again. God's conflict with death is accomplished. The grave shall not kill.'

And so again, the Lord thy God is the God over thy household. He watches over the marriage bond. He does not, in his care for the whole universe, forget thee and thy wife. He has uttered His decree that you shall live together in holy wedlock, and that no man shall break that covenant betwixt you made, and that you shall not break it to each other. His curse goes forth against that sin.

Yes, against sin. For, recollect, that there is no more precious life than this of wife, of husband. The life of trust and affection; the life of friendship and wedded love; the life of doing good to men; the life of reverence and worship. This is the true life of a man; not the life that is sustained by eating and drinking. And, therefore, God who cares much for that bodily life, cares more for this better life which He has bestowed upon His human creatures. And He encourages

and wishes them to give up one for the sake of the other. Brave men have been ready—are ready—to give up the life of their bodies, that their households may be safe from pollution, that their country may be governed by righteous laws; that they may save it from falling under wicked tyrants; that they may worship the true God in spirit and in truth. He who says thou shalt not kill, bids us understand that it is well to pour out blood as if it were water, rather than to become base and foul creatures—beasts, instead of His servants and children. That was the reason he sent the Israelites to drive out the Canaanites. They were corrupting and defiling the earth with their murders and adulteries and abominations. It was time that the earth should be cleared of them. It was time that a God of righteousness, who watches over life and marriage, and does not leave men to follow their own lusts, should be proclaimed among them. And as I said to you last Sunday about the commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee," that a nation in which the reverence for parents is gone, will not stay long on the land which the Lord its God has given it; so, I say, now, about the crimes of which I have spoken to-day. A land is defiled with blood, whether we think it or not; a land is defiled by breaches of the marriage vow in the high or the low. And when these crimes spread far and wide, when they are spoken lightly of, when they are thought only to concern those who commit

them, and not to concern us at all; when we are amused by reading about them, instead of being ashamed for the sake of our people; then let us look well that that does not come upon us which has come upon other people before us. Let us recollect that the God who gave these commandments is King now, as He was when they were heard on Sinai, and that there is no respect of persons with Him, and that He has sworn that He will set righteousness and truth on His earth, whoever shall prefer unrighteousness and falsehood.

But there is a question which you may very well ask me about this matter, which I will try to answer.

I have spoken as if murder and adultery were crimes which would certainly bring down God's righteous punishments upon the men who commit them, and upon the land which suffers them. But am I not sent to preach forgiveness to those who have sinned? ought I then to have spoken as if these judgments were sure; as if there were no escaping them? Brethren, I am sent to preach the largest and freest forgiveness that God can give, or man can receive. I am sent to tell you that God gave His Son to reconcile the world to Himself, and that Christ is the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world. And this message we are to proclaim without stint or measure to all manner of people; and those who proclaim it in hulks, and prisons, and penitentiaries, and convict settlements, to the worst and most guilty people, are true servants and handmaids of God, and are blessings to their country. But they

are so if they give this message as God gives it, not as man changes it. Christ died to take away the sin of men; He died to unite men to the righteous and sinless God. The Lord our God who has redeemed us out of the house of bondage will always deliver us from sin; will always give us a new and right and clean heart. He did that for David, the Jewish king, who had committed adultery and murder. He will do it for the poorest Englishman who has been guilty of the same sins. But He did not free David from punishment; He punished him all his life long. He made him feel all his life long that to seduce the wife of a poor soldier, and to get him slain, was a horrible offence in the eyes of the King of Kings, which He would visit not with some pretty little punishment, such as David might have invented for himself, but with sore and tremendous punishment, with the ingratitude of his children, and the rebellion of his people. It would have been very bad for this king if it had been otherwise. He would then never have known what God's righteousness is. He would never have sought for himself righteousness, or a deliverance from his own folly and sin. He would never have been righteous in his execution of God's laws, and yet tender to sinners who were not so bad as he had been. And so it is still. He who says, "Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery"—because He is the Lord our God, our Redeemer, our Father—will take away the murderous spirit out of the murderer, and give him a loving and

gentle spirit, even His own; will drive the foul spirit out of the adulterer's heart, and give him a holy and pure spirit, even His own. But He will not suffer either the one or the other to escape punishment. And I am well convinced that the murderer and adulterer to whom He has given repentance would be very sorry if they did escape it. They would feel that He was not the great God such as they believe Him to be. They would feel that He was not the Saviour such as they believe Him to be, seeing that He did not keep them in mind of the evil which had separated them from Him, and did not compel them to turn away from themselves and seek Him. Whenever the thought gets into the mind of any people that God can be persuaded by any prayers or intercessions of one sort or another, in earth or heaven, to release particular people from the punishment that He has thought good for them, that people will go further and further from righteousness; adulterers and assassins will both abound amongst them. And as they go further into evil they will become more superstitious, and will practise more arts to keep God at a distance from them. Therefore, brethren, drive all such thoughts from you. Understand that a man cannot have any curse so terrible as to be left in his sin, or to be allowed to go on without punishment; and that he cannot have any such great blessing as to be raised out of his sin, and to have it treated as his blackest and bitterest enemy. For this end Christ died and revived—not that He might save us from our Father in heaven, but that He might bring

us nigh to Him, and make us sharers of His goodness and truth, which are the everlasting foes of all that is not good and true in us, and in the whole universe.

I beseech you to recollect this, you who are bringing your children to be baptized, promising in their name that they should keep God's will and commandments, and walk in the same. I beseech you to think of it who are learning these commandments at school, and you who are old and who have learned what it is to break them. To all of you God speaks words of mercy and deliverance. He loves you all too much to leave you easy when you are disobeying and forgetting Him. And especially I beseech you who have eaten the bread and drunk the wine to-day at our Lord's table, to remember that these were the witness and assurance that He is with us everywhere, wherever we are, and whatever we are doing, and that He can make us obey what St. Paul calls the royal law—what St. James calls the law of liberty—thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself—and if this is written in our hearts, there is no fear that we shall do any wrong to our neighbour or to our country.

SERMON XII.

ST. JOHN BAPTIST'S DAY.

Preached at Lilleshall, Sunday after St. John Baptist's Day, 1860.

"In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the Wilderness, and saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand."—ST. MATTHEW iii. 1, 2.

THE 24th of June (the day before yesterday), we call, you know, Midsummer Day; we call it also St. John the Baptist's day. You can easily find out why it is Midsummer Day, but what is St. John the Baptist to us? why should we care to remember him?

I am going to speak of him—what he was, to whom he spoke, what he spoke, why he was called the Baptist, what he told of One greater than himself. You have heard it all before, but it may not be bad for any of us to hear it again; for the seasons come round again—the summer comes each year, bringing its flowers and fruits; they are new, though we seem to have seen the like every June. And we ourselves, though we change very much, yet we are the same.

We miss many faces that we used to see; young faces that we have not seen come to cheer us; but there are the old sorrows and trials which we cannot leave behind us, and which stand up in different shapes; there are old thoughts that appear again in our minds, though new ones may be with them. We are tempted to do wrong now as we used to be, and we do not forget the old temptations, they come back; old deeds that we did years ago return and look us in the face. The friends that we knew are there also, and that is the reason why I believe John the Baptist has something to tell us still—why his day may be as good for us as it was for our forefathers.

First, what was he? A very plain man, with a leathern girdle about his loins, caring little for what he ate, getting his food anywhere that he could—and his chance of getting anything was not great, for he was not seen in cities, he was chiefly in a desert.

Then this strange rough man was preaching, and the people came to him from all quarters, from the city of Jerusalem, we are told, and from all the country places round about; men who dwelt near the sea and far from it, men and women, rich and poor, people of all trades, and people without any trade, all came to hear what this man had to say. What could it mean? What did they want of him? What message could he bring them which could be meant for them all?

These people were all looking out for a King. They had heard that God one day would send them a King,

a righteous King. Their country was subject to foreigners; these foreigners had set up princes over them; these princes had been tyrants, and had not cared for them. They wanted One who did care for them; they wanted One who would set their country free; they wanted One who would set *them* free. For each one had a burden and a slavery of his own; each one said in his heart, 'When the true King comes He will be able to take away my burden; He will break the yoke that is on my neck!'

Well, this preacher said, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" That was a message that concerned all. If the news were true, it was just the news they needed to hear. The King you are looking for is coming. He is not far from you. He is going to establish His Kingdom amongst you.

But what did this mean? The kingdom of "*Heaven*" is at hand! Was it not to be a kingdom on earth, then? How could it reach them if it were not? How could it be governed by a native prince, one of themselves, if it were not? Such thoughts were in the minds of the people, you may be sure. And yet there were other thoughts in their minds too. If this kingdom was not from Heaven, could it be what they were seeking after? Did they not wish for one that should be all just? And could there be a kingdom that was quite just if it was not from Heaven, if it was not God's kingdom? Did not they want one in which poor and rich should be cared for equally? Would

that be, if it was only a kingdom set up by men? Even if the king was one of themselves, might he not lord it over them all the more for that? Might he not be the prouder because he had risen to such a height above them? But if it were the King of Heaven that was coming among them, would they like to meet Him? Another king might not know what they had been doing, but He would; another might speak to the crowd of people, and not notice this man or that man in the crowd. The King of Heaven would look straight into each man's heart; He would understand what he had done, and what he had wished or purposed. Supposing each man knew that he had been doing wrong things, and wishing and purposing wrong things, would he like to stand before this King?

Each man in those crowds of people who went to hear John the Baptist preaching, did know this; and yet that did not keep them from going; it was that which urged them to go; it was that which convinced them that the rough man with his camel's hair was no deceiver, but a true prophet. He spoke of a Kingdom of Heaven being near; and the heart of a man or a woman said, 'Yes, He must be near me, or how should I have remembered how I cheated my neighbour years ago, or plotted to cheat him? Who told me of it? I did not tell myself. John the Baptist could not tell me; it must be this King of Heaven who has told me. He cannot be far off. How shall I prepare for Him?'

Now John said that this was his business; he was

sent to prepare the way of the Lord! he was sent to tell men how they might meet their King! and, therefore, he joined the message, "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," with 'Repent; your King is near you! Turn round to Him; He has found out your secrets! Confess them to Him; you cannot see Him; but if you do this, there will be a way between your heart and Him. Your bad doings and bad thoughts have stopped up that way; He wishes to get rid of the rubbish, and to open the way again.'

And that brings me to the next part—what John's baptism had to do with his preaching. He preached, it is said, the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Remission means sending away. Their sins had choked their hearts. Their sins had been the rubbish which closed the way between them and God. Could they clear away the rubbish? Could John? I think not. Could He who created their minds and hearts? Surely He could. Surely He could turn their minds to Himself, if they found it ever so hard to do so. Well, this baptism was the simplest token which could be given them that God did this for them. Just as the water cleanses your bodies, so does He cleanse you—you, your own selves. He sends away that which you have been confessing to Him; that which is oppressing you, that which you cannot rid yourselves of. So the baptism was part of the preaching, it was as good as saying, 'It is not I who am preaching to you, it is God who is preaching to you!

He is preaching to you, one and all. It is He who is giving you, one and all, what you need, if you will have it.'

And, therefore, John joined other words to these, which were to show more clearly still that it was not he who was doing them any good, or who could do them good, except as he was God's minister, and that the water could do them no good except as it told them what God's mind to them was, and what He would work for them.

"I, indeed," he said, "baptize you with water, but there cometh One after me who is mightier than I; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." 'He shall give you of God's own good Spirit to call out your spirits; He shall burn up all that is foul and false in you.'

But before you can fully enter into the next words, I must speak to you of those who came to John to be baptized. There came the crowds of which I spoke, each with his own weight upon his own heart. Each told what was in him; and each found that the remission was not less for him because it was also for his neighbours. Each had sinned; each might turn and say, I have sinned; each might go away with this assurance, 'God hath given thee this pledge that He puts away thy sins.' But there came some, we are told, whom John rebuked, whom he called by a very hard name. He said to some Pharisees and Sadducees who came to him, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath

to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance; and think not to say within yourselves we have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Why did he speak thus? Might not these men repent as well as the others? Would not God put away their sins, and make a way for them to draw nigh to Him? Surely He would; John had come to say so to one and all. But these men thought themselves better and wiser than others; they supposed the way was quite open between them and God. Why then did they come to have their sins put away? If they were better and wiser than others, how could they want a blessing which put them on a level with all others? They thought they were the best of all the descendants of Abraham. 'You must find out,' said John, 'that you are not better than those who are not descendants of Abraham at all. God cares for all. If you do not wish to be like the rest of men, it will go badly with you. When the King comes, He will burn up all that is mere chaff, all that is foul and worthless in one man or another. He will gather in all that is wheat, all that is good and true, all that trust Him who is good, whether in one man or another.'

And so we are prepared for the next tidings. There came one to John the Baptist who was humbler than all who had come there yet. John did not see why He should come. "I have need," he said, "to be baptized of Thee!" But Jesus answered, "Thus it becometh us

to fulfil all righteousness." And as He went up out of the water, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove; and lo! a voice which said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Thus the word of John the Baptist was fulfilled—the kingdom of heaven had appeared. *He* had received the Holy Spirit, who was to baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire; *He* was come who was to gather all nations into one; *He* was come who was to bring remission of sins to all; *He* was come who was to give repentance to each.

All this happened in the country of Palestine, far away from us, eighteen hundred years ago. But about twelve hundred years ago, people came into the towns and villages of England and said, 'This kingdom of heaven of which John the Baptist spoke is fairly set up in the world. The King who was baptized in that River Jordan, is the only true King over men. He has said that His Father is our Father. He has said that He will give us, the people who dwell in the villages and towns of England, His Spirit, that we may be right and true men, and that we may turn from bad ways to good ways. Come, therefore,' they said, 'and be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Come and claim this King as your king and your elder brother. Come and claim His Father as your Father; claim Him as your children's as well as your own. Ask that you and they may not merely

be baptized in water, for the sending away of your sins, and the witness of God's forgiveness, but that you may have His Spirit of truth and love to guide you every day and hour, and to teach you what His kingdom is, and to prepare you for dwelling in it when you leave this earth, and when your place here knows you no more.'

These were strange tidings for our forefathers to hear, for they were worshipping all kinds of gods. They fancied their gods were their enemies, who wanted to be pacified and brought to forgive them by all kinds of offerings which they made. And now to be told this news—the God who made the heavens and earth is your Father and your friend; He seeks to turn your hearts to Him; He desires to put away all the wrong that is in you, and to make you right; He has sent His Son to bind you all together—men of all different callings, men of all different countries, men of all different languages—into one. He would have no one think himself better than another. He would have all feel that they are His children, and members one of another. To hear this news, I say, was very strange to these men, who had fancied it was all so different in this world, and in the world they could not see; but somehow or other they did accept these tidings; they were baptized into this Name, and their children were, and their children's children. And England became a Christian land—that is, it confessed the Christ of whom John spoke, to be its King. And boys and girls were brought up in

schools to believe that it was even so, and that His Spirit was given them that they might understand the things on earth and the things in heaven, that they might do their work as fathers and husbands, and brothers and sisters, as squires and farmers and labourers here, and might know the truth and righteousness and love, that are to last for ever and ever.

But now my friends, if all this is true, we need to be reminded of it year by year, and day by day, for it cannot be a thing written of in a book merely; it must be about our bed and our board; it must concern us in all our common business. For you see the message of John the Baptist concerns the God who liveth for ever, what He is, whether He is altogether good and righteous and true, one who hates all evil and pride, or whether He is what men often take Him to be—unmerciful and cruel, and like themselves. And it concerns us men, whatever we are, whether we are bound together in one dear Lord, who took the nature of all and died the death of all, or whether we are, as we often take ourselves to be, each with a separate interest from the other, sent into the world to trip one another up and destroy one another. And it concerns the question whether we have a good and loving Spirit to bring us right and to keep us from wrong, or whether we are left to ourselves and all the bad influences that are about us, and all the wild thoughts that spring up in us. It concerns the question whether, when we have gone out of the good way, there is anyone who cares to bring us back

into the good way. It concerns the question whether we are separated from the friends that have gone away out of our sight, or whether we are part of the same kingdom with them, and whether we may all come to serve our King better and more truly through ages upon ages. So, then, you will not wonder that we keep John the Baptist's day. And you will not think it out of place in the bright summer days; for surely if we heed the message which it brings, every summer day may be more beautiful to us, and no winter day need be dark. Midsummer and Christmas may rejoice together, for the first says, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" and the second says, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

SERMON XIII.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

Preached at Lilleshall, 1860.

"And after six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John, his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them."—St. Matthew xvii. 1, 2.

We have heard strange things in the second lesson. Let me try to recall them to you, and let us then think what they have to do with us, who are met in this church to-day.

Three fishermen, who are called here Peter, James, and John, had left their father's ship and their nets. A Person had said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." They had felt that they must follow Him. He had a right to call them. Their business was to obey. They had gone with Him wherever He went. He had explained to them the world in which they were dwelling. It seemed as if they had never known the commonest thing before. Yet He spoke of very common things—of sowers sowing corn; of husbandmen hiring themselves out

for the day; of fishermen getting good and bad fish into their nets. These old things became new to them, when He spoke of them. And what was more, through these things He enabled them to understand what was passing in themselves. He showed them what a wonderful world was within them. And He spoke to them of a Father who had created the world which they saw with their eyes, and who ruled over that inner world which they could not see. He called *that* especially God's kingdom. His Father watched over the ravens and the lilies; but their hearts were His own dearest treasure.

These poor men had listened to these discourses of Jesus, and they had seen His acts. They had been with Him when He healed the sick, and raised the dead, and cast out devils. They had these proofs that He was a King; and moreover He had given them power to do as He did. They were sent to preach the Kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. So their countrymen were to find out what kind of kingdom that was; so they were to see that their King was their friend and deliverer.

But there was nothing in the appearance of their teacher which marked Him out from other men. He was not clothed more gorgeously. He stood aloof from none, even the poorest. They were not the wise nor the great who were His chosen companions. He hungered and was weary, as they were. He seemed to feel the sicknesses which He took away. He had

told them that He should die, and die by a shocking death, the death of slaves and criminals.

On a certain day, St. Matthew says, He led these fishermen to a lonely place in a high mountain; and then a sudden change came over Him. His garments became white. His face became bright and glorious, like no face they had ever looked upon; and presently there were companions with Him, who had not come up the mountain. They were men who had dwelt on the earth ages before. One was the old lawgiver and deliverer of the Israelites, that Moses who had brought them out of Egypt, and had died before they entered the promised land. The other was Elijah the prophet, who bore witness for the Lord God, when the king and the people had forsaken Him. The fishermen were not left in doubt who they were. They talked with Jesus. They spoke not of the law, nor of the wandering of the Israelites, nor of Elijah's chariot of fire; they spoke of the death that Jesus should die in Jerusalem—*that* they seemed to care for more, and account more wonderful than all that they had known while they walked the earth, and all they had known since they left the earth.

It was a marvellous vision; the eyes of the Apostles were dazzled. Peter wanted to stay always on the mountain, and to build tabernacles for his Master, and for Moses, and for Elijah. But he knew not what he said. While he was speaking, a cloud overshadowed them; a voice was heard, saying to them, "This is my

Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him." They fell on their faces, and were sore afraid, till another voice said to them, "Arise, and be not afraid." It was their Master. He was with them still. But the strangers were gone. The brightness had passed away.

We find them next coming down from the Mount. They are wondering as you may suppose. He, with whom they spoke so freely, so familiarly, is then a very awful Being. Moses and Elijah do Him homage. The voice spoke of Him as a Son. Are they to proclaim Him by that name? Not yet! the time will come. But He must first die and rise again; till then they are to tell the vision to no man. Must they not now ask questions of their Master, as they did before? They cannot help asking Him questions; the sight they have seen obliges them to ask Him. Who else can give them an answer? They had been always told that some divine Person was to come. But their teachers had said that Elijah would come first to prepare His way. They had seen Elijah on the Mount. Was he coming into the world again? Their Master tells them that one had come in the spirit and power of Elijah, to prepare His way. In John the Baptist, clad in camel's hair and with a leathern girdle, they had seen God's prophet. But he had been beheaded; and the Son of God would not have better, but worse treatment.

So they converse as they come down the slope of the

hill. At the bottom of it they find a great crowd; some of their companions are in it. There is loud disputing. In the midst of it is a boy, tossed about in a fit, foaming at the mouth, not to be held; his father has been begging Christ's Apostles to cure him. They have tried and failed. Here is a change from that still mountain, with the white garments, and the glorious face, and the holy men of the old world. Nothing but clamour and anguish and helplessness; at first it seems as if the boy's case were indeed hopeless. The voice of Christ only increases his raving, but at last he becomes quiet; the spirit that tormented him departs; he is cured from that hour.

All this history is contained in a few verses. You can read it over in two or three minutes. But for eighteen centuries it has had hold of people's hearts. It has been written of, spoken of, turned into beautiful pictures. Every man who has thought about it seriously has felt that it was a message for him and for all men, and not only for Peter, James, and John, for the disciples below the mountain, for the boy, and his father. Why have they thought so? What message has it for us?

I have told you that Jesus called these poor fishermen, and that He walked with them, and opened their minds to truths that had been hidden from them. Was not that a special privilege of theirs? *No*, brethren; Jesus called Himself the Son of Man. He selected these disciples from the humblest class of

men, that they might be specimens to all men of what He is doing for them. It was not because the disciples saw Christ with their eyes, that they were able to receive His instruction. He spoke to something within them which could not see it. He spoke to their hearts; they understood Him better after they had ceased to see Him than when they could look into His face, and when His lips moved to answer their questions. And therefore do not doubt me when I say He is teaching you and me, even as He taught them. He is walking with us as He walked with them. Every one of us may believe that. As you sow, or reap, or go leasing, you may be sure there is an eye upon you, and that eye is the eye of the Son of Man; you may be sure that a teacher is with you, and that teacher is the Son of Man; you may be sure that there are parables in your fields, as there were in the fields of Galilee through which He walked, parables in all your doings as servants or masters, which He can draw out of them, as He drew them out of the common tasks which His disciples were engaged in.

Whatever we are busy about, God has set us that business. And there is a way of doing it which is the right way, which is His way; and the Son of Man would open our hearts to understand that right way, and to shun the wrong way; and when we learn the right way from Him, then He shows us more. He enables us to see that God governs us, and governs

the world according to that right and true way which He has marked for us in our little pursuits and toils.

My friends, if we did think that we have this secret friend and teacher with us at all times, and that He is the secret friend and teacher of our neighbours too, it would be a mighty help to us. And then we should understand that, if we ourselves or our friends fall sick and we recover, it is Christ who raises up, as He raised up the palsied man and the lepers in the cities of Galilee; that when a man who was possessed with all bad thoughts and was running on in a bad way, a drunkard and a fornicator, a man full of spite and malice, comes to his right mind, it is because Christ drives the devil out of him. And then we begin to believe that when men go out of the world, He does not leave them, but raises them again, as truly as He raised Lazarus in this world. We are dull in our faith just as the disciples were. But Christ can kindle it in us all by His Spirit, and we should ask that He will.

And sometimes it comes to pass that he makes men now-a-days, as He made Peter and James and John, feel that He who has been speaking to them in their private walks, and teaching them things they would never have learned but for Him, and curing their sicknesses, is indeed the King of glory, the Prince of all the earth. Sometimes men have felt, perhaps when they were kneeling at the Lord's Supper, eating the bread and drinking the wine—perhaps when they were

in lonely chambers, or in prisons for righteousness' sake—that they were not with Him only, but with His saints, with those who had left the world, with the noble men of other days, with the friends whom they had lost out of their sight. 'All these have been drawn together by His cross; all have owned Him as their common Lord, who has died, and who lives.

Only three of the disciples were on the Mount. And only two or three, just at rare times, may feel as if they were carried into a brighter world, and as if they beheld things as they are, not hidden by the mists of our earth. I do not know to whom God grants such manifestations; but I have no doubt from what I have read that there are some, probably those who have some special work or suffering to go through—humble people, I dare to say, of whom the world takes no note. But this also we should remember, these bright visions soon pass away. A cloud comes over those who have enjoyed them; and to them, too, there comes a voice out of the cloud, 'This is my Son, hear Him.' That is to say, what you are to learn from the vision is to be more meek and gentle, as the Son of Man is; to observe more what He is saying to you in all common things; to be more thoughtful about other people, because He is thoughtful about them. Hear His commandment to be true and faithful in all your transactions with your fellow-men; hear Him warning you, when you are tempted to be vain and greedy; hear His voice checking you when you are exalted, and bidding you arise

and be not afraid when you are downcast. You know it is the voice of the Son of God. And He tells you not to speak much of anything that merely concerns yourself, if you have ever so much reason to be thankful for it. Speak of His resurrection from the dead, which concerns all persons living as well as you.

And now you see how the remaining part of the story also belongs to us. Men who have had hours of quietness and peace and bright visions, do not like the noise and clatter of the crowd. They find it very distracting. They would rather forget that people are disputing, and that ministers of God are proving their weakness, and that men are tormented with all kinds of plagues and sorrows. But God does not let them forget it. In this world they are to live and work. If they are Christ's disciples, these are the sights they must witness continually, not those on the Mount. They must be continually taught, which is harder still, their own folly, and ignorance, and incapacity; and if they will get these lessons by heart, there are others and more cheering ones for them. Christ is in the crowd, as He was in the Mount. He is showing His power in the midst of noisy, disputatious men. He is doing what His disciples cannot do. He is at work to help fathers and children to whom no mortal can bring help. The disciples got at least a diviner teaching, they knew more of Christ, from what they saw below the mountain, than from what they saw upon it. They learnt more fully that Christ was the Son of Man, and

that He cares for all men; they learnt more that He was the Son of God, and that He had come into the world to do His Father's work. And so may all of us learn more of the Son of Man and the Son of God from our own sufferings and from the sufferings of others, than we could learn if we were carried out of the world and saw His countenance shining like the light, and Moses and Elias talking with Him.

But that vision was not granted to the disciples for nothing; and it is not for nothing that we are permitted to read of it in this distant land, so long after it has departed. It was to tell the disciples, and to tell us, that one day He who appeared on earth as a poor man, walking with poor men, and dying the death of a slave, would appear in the glory of His Father and of His holy angels; that Moses and Elijah, and every one of those who had done His work on earth, would be with Him. It was to tell them, and to tell us, that every human creature shall see Him when He is manifested in His glory; that all the mists which have hidden Him from us shall be scattered; that the quick and the dead shall alike hear His voice. It was to tell them and us that this glory will only confound us and overwhelm us if we are not listening to Him now, living for Him now; that if we are, if we are asking Him to purge us from our sins and make us true men, we shall long for His appearing to end the conflict and anguish of the world, and to set all things right.

SERMON XIV.

THE PUBLICAN.

Preached at Redmarley, 11th Sunday after Trinity, August 11, 1861.

"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and every one that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—ST. LUKE xviii. 14.

Two men, it is said in the Gospel we have just read, went up into the temple to pray. They went to the same place: they went for the same end. They were both Jews and they went to the place in which the Lord God had told the Jews that He would meet with them and hear them. They went to ask that He would do what He had promised.

Our Lord says one of these men went back to his house justified rather than the other. He returned with a lighter, freer heart. He had got the thing he sought for; our Lord tells us this; and he knows it. The hearts of these men are open to Him. He understands what they desire. He understands why one obtains what he desires and the other misses it.

And He wishes us to understand the secret also; for

we are all interested in it. This story of the publican and the Pharisee is called a parable. That is to say, it is an example of what is going on in a thousand different places, in times thousands of years apart. It happened in the temple of Jerusalem. It happens in every English church. It happened when our Lord was upon earth; it happens in the year 1861.

What, then, was the difference between these two men—the Pharisee and the publican? Had the one who went down to his house justified, some great advantage over his neighbour? No; he had, to all appearances, great disadvantages. He was a man in bad repute. He belonged to a class of men who did many evil things. People charged him with sharing in them. You see what the Pharisee thought of him. He thanked God that he was not like that publican or tax-gatherer. He thought that the man who was praying a little way from him was very likely an unjust man or an extortioner; he knew that he had a bad name.

The Pharisee himself had a very good name. He was one of a class to whom the people looked up. He had a character to preserve. And he says—and for aught we know he says truly—that he had preserved it. He could not be accused of any crime against his fellow-creatures. He could not be accused of neglecting the service of his Creator.

So far all seems in his favour; all seems to go against the publican: and what is more, the publican thinks so himself. He does not try to prove that he has done his

duty to God or his duty to his neighbour. He does not believe that he has. Nay, he is sure that he has not. He does not venture to raise his eyes to heaven. He smites upon his breast. He says, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

And what comes of this? *That* comes of it which God had said should come. He had bidden men who had any load upon their hearts to come into His temple and lay it bare before Him. He had bidden those who had broken His law to own that they had broken it. He had invited those who were not serving Him as they wished to serve Him, frankly to tell Him that they were not. He had invited those who were not loving their neighbours as they wished to love them, not to keep that wrong to themselves, but to ask deliverance from it of Him. The publican had done this. He was not satisfied with himself; he said that he was not. He could not say much about his trouble or his need. Perhaps he did not know precisely what it was, just as we often feel a pain or a sickness without knowing where it is. But he had come into the presence of One who understood what he did not understand. His muttered words even would be interpreted rightly. He was seeking the God of mercy; he was seeking the Deliverer from sin. "Be merciful to me a sinner," was enough for him.

Therefore he went down to his house justified. He could not justify himself. God had justified him. He had given him a clean conscience and a right heart.

His sin did not cleave to him any longer, did not press him down, did not take the strength out of him. He could say, 'God counts it as His enemy even as I count it mine. He is my Lord; this sin is not my Lord, and shall not be. In His strength I will defy it.'

Now the Pharisee did not get this justification, for he did not desire it. He justified himself. He was content with his own thoughts and doings. He wanted nothing. He had prayed in the temple because he believed it was a proper and right thing to pray. He had not prayed because there was any divine blessing which he could not do without, any great curse from which he must be set free.

And so it will be, so it must be, our Lord says, always. Is it not reasonable? The God of grace and mercy gives to each that which he craves for; if we think all is well with us, He will leave us to try whether all is well. If we find that there is something not well, something that must be set right in us, He will set it right.

And yet, brethren, this is not all. God does not justify those who justify themselves, who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others. But He does—like a merciful Father—show us that we cannot trust in ourselves, and that we are not righteous, and that we have no excuse for despising others. He lays bare the secret wrong that is in us. He make us see that we are just as likely to fall into sin, that we have just as little strength of our own to do what is right as any

of our neighbours whom we have been looking down upon. He shows us that all our strength is in Him. He humbles us when we are exalted in our own conceit, just that He may exalt us when He has humbled us. That is the course of His wise and gracious government with every one of us. Let every one of us try to understand it, and then we shall profit by all the things that befall us. We shall profit by the foolish and wrong doings that we have committed in time past. We shall profit, above all, by the prayers that we offer when we are alone, and when we come to this house.

1. We shall profit by all that befalls us. If it is good and necessary for most of us to be humbled—if we cannot be anything or do anything right till we are humbled, then be sure God means all that He sends us for this purpose. Sometimes it may be a great trouble, sometimes it may be a little vexing trouble which overtakes us. One may do the work as well as the other. One may bring down our self-confidence as well as the other. God knows which will do it best for each of us. Or He may send us good and bright days. They may tend to our humiliation as much as the others. We may wonder what right we have to them; how such people as we should have blessings that we have done so little for. Anything may turn to the increase of our pride if we receive it without asking for God's Spirit to make it good. Anything may help to take the pride out of us if His Spirit comes with it.

2. Yes; and therefore I say a man's past transgres-

sions and his most easily-besetting sin may be used, if he will use them, for this end. Sometimes a person is inclined to forget all the things he has done amiss in past times, and would fain think they have nothing to do with him now. Then up starts the recollection of some one of them. It flashes across him as he lies on a sick bed: he cannot throw it off. Or it comes to him in another way. He thought he had got rid of some bad habit—of drinking perhaps. He supposes he is quite safe; but he meets an old companion. The old sin catches him and throttles him again. It was lying hid; but it was not gone. He said he had not that sin still; he deceived himself. Is that to make him despair? Is it to lead him to say, 'I must be the slave of this wicked power. I must confess the devil for my ruler.' No; it is to make him cry, 'God be merciful to me a sinner. I am worse and weaker than I knew. I find I cannot trust myself for an hour. The past evil comes back to me. It seems always present. But Thou, O God, canst raise me out of it. It drives me to Thee. Be merciful to me, not in sparing my sin, for that is my foe and my curse, but in separating me from it as far as the East is from the West. And I am separate from it as far as the East is from the West, when I am finding my refuge and my home in Thee.'

And so you will see what I meant when I said that our Lord is teaching us to-day what all our prayers at church are for, and what all our prayers at home are for.

The first words you hear in church are a call to confess your sins. The first act you join in with the minister is that of owning to the Almighty and most merciful Father that you have erred and strayed from His way like lost sheep. That is to say, we are all treated alike. No one is allowed to trust in himself that he is righteous, and to despise others. Each brings his own burden. Each says, "Be merciful to me a sinner." Each cries against his own wrong; each asks for help against his own guilt. And yet we all come together. There is a common salvation for us. We call upon God as the Father of us all. We call on Him in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who has redeemed us all; in whom there is no sin; in whom He loves all, and is satisfied with all. While each is trying to stand on his own ground, while each is pleased and satisfied with himself, there is nothing but discontent, envying, and backbiting. When each one gives up his own pretension to be good, and trusts in the good God, and believes that that God has given up His Son for his neighbours as well as for himself, and asks for the loving Spirit to dwell with us all and keep us one, then do we indeed become Christ's family on earth, part of that great family in heaven and earth, of which He is the head and elder brother. And we may be sure that as we kneel by our bedsides, or as we cry when we are out in the field or at our work, 'God be merciful to us sinners; keep us from doing this wrong thing; help us not to neglect this act of duty or of kindness,' He

will present that prayer before God. It will be joined to the prayer of that publican in the temple, and to all the good prayers that have been offered since the world began. And the man who has poured it out will go to his home with a clean heart and right spirit, humbled in himself, exalted in God; waiting for the day when He who was humble, and lowly, and merciful, shall be revealed in the glory of His Father and the holy angels, and when all pride, and vanity, and sin shall be banished out of His universe.

SERMON XV.

THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH.

Preached at Redmarley, Morning of the 14th Sunday after Trinity, September 1, 1861.

"I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."—GALATIANS v. 16.

THE Galatians, to whom St. Paul wrote these words, were a warm-hearted people, but they were very changeable. At one time they were exceedingly fond of St. Paul. They would have plucked out their own eyes, he says, to give them to him, if that would have done him any good. But within a short time they began to suspect him; they listened to people who said that he had deceived them, and that he was no true apostle. They counted him an enemy, and many of them became his enemies. How had this come to pass? It had come to pass thus: St. Paul had brought them a good message. He said that the Eternal God had sent His Son into the world to adopt them into His family, to make them His own sons and daughters. He said that through His Son God

had sent His Spirit to dwell with them, that they might know Him and love Him, and that they might love one another. The Galatians had listened to these words; they had never heard any that were like them before. They had thought the powers above looked very enviously at them, and wanted a great many things of them; they thought they had done wrong, and offended these powers; they thought if there was one power greater than all, they must have offended Him most, and He must be the most angry with them. How wonderful it was to be told that the Lord of all—He who had created them—loved them; that He felt to them as a father feels to children who have forgotten him and gone away from his house; that He was Himself fetching them back; that they were not to turn away from Him because they had done bad things, but might turn to Him, and He would put the evil from them, and blot it out. And how wonderful to hear that they had the Spirit of the Father near them at all times to help them and strengthen them; how wonderful to have all this sealed and assured to them by this token, that they were baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And yet the hearts of these Galatians said this good news must be true; and they would have been glad to put out their own eyes for his sake who had brought them the news.

But as time went on, they began to feel bad thoughts rising in them; and they yielded to these bad thoughts,

and bad acts came out of them; they were bitter and cruel to one another; they cheated each other; they fell into wantonness and drunkenness, just as they had done when they were heathens—just as the heathen people around them did. 'Well,' they began to say to themselves, 'but how can this be if St. Paul was right in what he said to us at first; did he not speak of our being cleansed from our sins? did he not speak of our being made new men? But our sins are with us still; we are just the same now that we were before.' Then came people who said to them, 'Yes, Paul has indeed led you wrong. This baptism into the name of Christ does not mean what he would persuade you that it means. You are not really taken to be children of God. If you would get any advantage from Christ's coming, you must become like us Jews. You must come under our law; then perhaps God may give you some blessings hereafter. But you must not begin with thinking that you are already delivered and brought into God's family.' The Galatians gave heed to what these men said, and so they counted St. Paul for their enemy.

St. Paul was very much grieved; but the pain they caused him was nothing. He knew that he had told them the truth, and that these people who had come among them and slandered him were not telling them the truth. He knew that they wanted the truth which he had told them; that they could not be right and good men without it. But how then could he account

for their having fallen into these bad ways? How could he justify what he had said to them about their being children of God and members of Christ, and of their having the Spirit of God with them to help and teach them? Could he have meant that really? Must he not have meant it for some of them and not for others?

No! what St. Paul said to all, he intended all to receive. If it was true about one, it was true about another. If *any* who were baptized could say, 'God has given us the sign that we are His children,' *all* who were baptized could say, 'God has given us the sign that we are His children.' And if they believed that, they would soon find what enemies they had who were trying to hinder them from acting as if they were His children. They would soon find that they had a flesh in them that was leading them to think all manner of wrong things, and to do all manner of wrong things. And if they gave way to that flesh of theirs, it would be a very cruel master to them, and would drive them very hard. What then? Were they not to count themselves God's children because this was so? That would be just as if any son or daughter on earth were to say, 'I have no father or mother,' because he had been rebellious against his father and mother, and had not chosen to do the things they commanded. That would be to shrink from confessing how much they had offended, and what a gracious loving God they had grieved. That would be saying that He had changed because they had changed.

That would be cutting themselves off from the only way of being set free from the evil and being made right. And St. Paul told them plainly that if they tried to keep God's law when they had ceased to believe in this covenant that He had made with them as His sons and daughters, they would not be able to keep it; they would fight against it; they would do the things which it told them not to do.

But he says in the Epistle we have read to-day, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

What does that mean, "Walk in the Spirit?" It means: Live as if this were true which I have told you, and as if you were God's children, and God were looking upon you as a Father, and as if He were wishing you to do right, and were helping you to do right, and were giving you His own good and right Spirit, that you might do right. And then you "shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." They will rise up in you; they will tell you that you must obey them. But you can say, 'No, we are God's children; we will not yield to them. They may be very strong, but His Spirit is stronger, we will yield to that.' For he goes on, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary" to each other. He does not say that about other men more than about himself. He could tell other men that it was so with them, because he found out that it was so with him. It was a continued battle in him. He had something in him which was looking

up, desiring what was good, and wanting to know what was good, and asking to be good. He had something in him which was looking down, and wishing for things that were not good, and not caring to find out what was good and what was evil; and choosing to have its own way, and not to ask to be guided into the right way. It was so with St. Paul; he could confidently say to each of the Galatians, 'It is so with you, and it is so with me.' "And, therefore," he says, "we do not the things that we would." The bad man does not do all the bad things that he thinks of; there is a right spirit checking him. The good man does not do all the good things that he thinks of, there is a flesh checking him. 'But yet,' he says, 'you may be led by the Spirit. The weakest of you may; those who feel yourselves weak, and desire to be led by such a gracious and loving Lord. And then you will not be under the law.' *That* he says in answer to those people who told the Galatians that they must not think that God was their Father; that they must come under the law which God gave men before He sent His Son to claim them as His children. He reminds them always that that is their state and their glory; they must not give that up if they wish to get the better of their bad inclinations. 'You are led by the Spirit,' he tells them, 'because you are God's children; you are not servants but sons, and, therefore, He sends His Spirit into your hearts, that you may say, Abba, Father!'

Then he goes on to tell them, in very plain language, what kind of things they would do if they were left to themselves and did just the things which their flesh stirred them up to do. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these—adultery, fornication, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelling, and such like." As much as to say—If you look at the world and see what things are going on in it—how wives are separated from their husbands, how men and women live to ruin each other, how nations fight with each other, what strifes there are in neighbourhoods and families, how men quarrel about the least things and the greatest, even about the religion which should unite them together, how thousands and ten thousands become beasts instead of men through drunkenness, how they give themselves to revelling, and out of that comes hatred and often murder—if you look at all these things, you will understand what there is working in us all, and what we should become if we were our own masters. And he says of these things, "I tell you now, as I told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." That is as much as to say, 'I have not changed my mind in the least. I always said to you that these things are the curse and damnation of all people who give way to them. It does not signify who they are, whether they call themselves Christians or heathens, they who do such things

choose the devil for their king, and ask him to rule over them.' But then he goes on, 'there are other works doing on this earth, thanks be to God its King. There is love in this world, there is joy in the earth, there is peace on the earth; you see parents who are caring about their children; you see men and women who are doing kind, and gentle, and good acts; you see people in sickness and poverty who are full of faith and trust; you see people who are bearing injuries meekly; you see people who are restraining themselves when they are tempted to drunkenness.'

Where do all these good fruits come from? They come, as I told you before, from the Spirit of God. They are the things which God Himself is working in us to do. Well, if you believe that, you can take your choice. You may walk in the Spirit, and claim your place as God's children, as baptized men; or you may follow the flesh, and then you will always be ready for some of those dark and devilish works of which I spoke to you just now. If you take the first course, you will never find God's law against you; it will always be on your side. In you will be crucified, in Christ's name and in His strength, those things which God hates and which make men miserable.

Now, brethren, remember that all this is spoken to us. Just as St. Paul and the Galatians had this flesh and this Spirit fighting in them, so have you and I. Just as the flesh was drawing them down to low, vile things, to those things that ruin the body and soul and

set us at war with each other, so it is with you and me. We are not different, so far, from other men. Christians have not a whit better natures than Jews or heathen. Oftentimes they seem to be much worse; oftentimes Jews and heathen do good things which should make us ashamed. And why is this? If we believed in baptism we should have obeyed its teaching. We should know that all the good which is in them would come from God's dear and loving Spirit; that whatever kindness, gentleness, truth, there is in any, comes from the goodness and gentleness and truth of God. And then we should say, 'Oh, God! Thou hast made us Thy children: Thou hast told us Thou art our Father in Christ Jesus our Lord. Hold us fast to Thee. Fulfil Thy promise of writing Thy law in our hearts by the Spirit. Never let us go out of this bond. Our godfathers and godmothers renounced for us the service of the world and the flesh and the devil. They said they were not our masters and should not be our masters. Help us to say the same every day and every hour. Help us to fight the good fight of faith. For it is only by faith in Thee that we can do anything that is right, or avoid anything that is wrong; only while we believe that Thou art altogether good, and that Thou art our Father, and that Thou hast delivered us from our sins, and that Thou art always on our side; it is only then we put to death our lusts and our hatred and our revelling, only then we can be meek and gentle and brave and true, as Thou hast made us to be.'

SERMON XVI.

MAN'S DOMINION.

Preached at Redmarley, Afternoon of the 14th Sunday after Trinity, September 1, 1861.

"Oh, Lord, our Governor, how excellent is Thy Name in all the earth."
PSALM viii.

WE have been reading this Psalm together this afternoon. Let us try if we cannot get some good out of it that will go through the week—that will make us rejoice more together in the bright skies, and the harvest, and in all other good things that we receive at God's hands.

I suppose the person who wrote it was out on some evening or night when the moon and the stars were shining very clearly. Perhaps he was out on the hills with his flock of sheep; for you know that a shepherd sang a great number of these psalms; one who, the Scriptures say, was taken from following the ewes great with young, that he might be a leader and shepherd of the people.

That shepherd must have seen many beautiful nights

and mornings whilst he was about his work. But I doubt if merely seeing them would have done much for him. Many of us have such sights often before us, and yet we do not mind them at all; they are not much more to us than they would be to a blind man. But David had believed that He who created the heavens, and stretched them out, was the Lord God of his fathers and of him; that He had cared for his fathers, and that He cared for him; that He had desired them to trust Him and know Him and worship Him. He sang songs to God because he believed in Him as a helper and as a friend; as One from whom every good thing, and every good thought and good work, must come.

Well, that was what was most in his mind on the evening that I spoke of. "Oh Lord," he says, "our Governor, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth; Thou that hast set Thy glory above the heavens." "Oh Lord, our Governor," that is, the governor of us—Thy people Israel, whom Thou hast watched over and brought out of the house of bondage, and to whom Thou hast given a good and righteous law; and whom Thou defendest against our enemies. Surely Thy great name is not confined to us. It is "excellent in all the earth." Thou rulest over all this wide world, however far it may spread, though there may be countries in it that I have never heard of, or dreamed of. Yea, Thou canst not be confined to this earth. These heavens over my head speak of a *glory* that goes further than I can think or dream of. This moon, and these stars, what are they?

Who can tell me? I only know they show forth Thy glory; Thou that art our King and our Deliverer.

Then a thought comes to him of his own littleness. He is venturing to think of God, and to pray to Him; he, a mere child! Yes, he says, Thou hast ordained me to do so: Thou hast put these thoughts and praises into my heart and my lips. Thou choosest babes and sucklings to praise Thee; Thou showest them what beauty and joy there is in Thy universe. When the enemy and the darkness say, I have spoiled it all; I have brought death and sin and misery into it; I am the lord of it—No, cry these babes and sucklings, Thou art not the lord of it. Evil and death have not conquered the Lord, our Governor. See how these glorious heavens, that last over from generation to generation, bear witness of Him; see how they tell of a living and unchangeable God.

Yes, he goes on—"I will consider the heavens the work of Thy hands, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained." It is a great strength and comfort and wonder to consider them, and to be sure that they are Thine, and that Thou art our God.

But then, when I consider them, I cannot help thinking again what poor beggarly creatures we are. Can it be that Thou who madest these heavens carest for such worms? "What is man that Thou art mindful of him; and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" he stops for a moment at that question; it staggers him. These glorious heavens, and then the little

creature who lasts at the best but three-score years and ten, and who may be cut off in an instant; who is weaker than any of the animals about him; whom an insect may kill; who spends his time in such trifles—what is this man, that Thou the creator of the heavens and earth, should think about him, should even want him? But he recollects himself—He does not speak meanly of man, for all he looks so poor and contemptible. "Thou madest him lower than the angels, to crown him with glory and worship."

This poor creature—man—may be very weak, the weakest of Thy creatures; but there is a spirit in him. He is more like an angel than all these beautiful and glorious things which I look at. Yea, and though he is lower than the angels; though he suffers sorrow and death; I believe that Thou hast permitted these only that thou mayest crown him with glory and worship. I believe Thou hast made him to show forth Thy glory and worship more than angels even can show it forth. I may not be able to see how that should be, but I cannot doubt it. For I see that "Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, and whatsoever walketh through the paths of the sea." Very wonderful indeed that that should be so, and yet David knew that it was so. Flocks of sheep, droves of oxen, obeyed him, a feeble man; they did the things which he bade them

do. He was able to direct them, not by the strength of his arms, but by the power of his words. He was able to direct them best when he was most gentle with them. With the wild beasts of the field—those that preyed upon other creatures—it was different; these he had power to kill if he could not tame them. David told King Saul how when a bear and a lion came out against his flock might was given him to slay them; *that* assured him that he should have might to slay the huge Philistine who was defying the armies of his country. In all these ways he was taught that it is the spirit that is in a creature—not its size or its fierceness—which makes it victorious, and that this spirit is what God put into man when He made Him after His own image. Therefore, He did not doubt that some day or other it would be shown him how glorious man is; how truly God had put all things under his feet. It was hard to expect that when he saw how mean human beings made themselves; how they stooped to all the animals and even worshipped them; how they seemed to prize the food which the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, supplied them with, more than their own bodies and souls; how wicked they were, while the birds and beasts and fishes were innocent—it was hard to think that one day men should be shown to be indeed what God had made them to be, in spite of their own wilfulness. And yet he who wrote this psalm could not believe in God and not believe that what He had said must come to pass. It must be shown that neither the

moon nor the stars were so great and divine as the lowest human being that they shine upon. He was sure of this, and therefore he could say again, "Oh Lord, our Governor, how excellent is Thy name in all the world." Thy purpose will prevail, however we may try to set it at nought. Thou wilt make Thy name glorious, and men shall be glorified in Thee.

Was the psalmist mistaken? We were reading a few Sundays ago the Epistle to the Hebrews. That letter was written to the Jews who heard the Psalms full a thousand years after David's death. It was written forty or fifty years after the death of Him whom we call the Son of David and the Son of God—Jesus Christ our Lord. And the writer says in it, We do not yet see all things put under now, as the psalmist says they are meant to be; "but we see Jesus, who for the suffering of death was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour." What has that to do with what we have been speaking of this afternoon? Everything. "When we consider the heavens and the earth the work of God's hands, the moon and the stars which He hath ordained," we must needs begin to think, as the psalmist does, "What is man?"—this poor, wretched, sinful, dying creature—"that Thou art mindful of him." And then we who believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, can make answer and say, 'Yea, verily, but the Son of God, by whom the world was made, and all the host of them, was born of a woman,

became a poor man upon this earth of ours; and He, while He was upon earth, showed that the winds and the waves and all creatures were subject to Him. And then He suffered the death of the Cross, and was buried and went into hell, and rose again from the dead, and sitteth at the right hand of His Father. And, therefore, no people shall frighten us and crush us with talking about the heavens and all the host of them. We verily believe that a Man is above all these. We verily believe that One who is of our nature, and who bore our sins and died our death, is the King who was before all ages, and so He shall live on through ages upon ages. And, therefore, we are sure that God has not created all things in vain; and that it is a truth, and no lie, that He has created man in His own image; and that every little baby just born has a glory upon it which does not belong to all works of God's hands, let them be as great and glorious as they may. And we believe, moreover, that He who has exalted His own Son to be our King, has sent His Spirit to raise up our spirits, that we may not be poor crawling creatures, meaner than all the things we see and handle, but that we may look up to Him where He is, and may call His Father our Father, and may join with Angels and Archangels in blessing Him for all the works of His hands.'

And, my friends, this is what we have desired for that little infant whom we have just received into the congregation of Christ's flock, and signed with the sign of

the cross. We said that that child was one of the race for which Christ died; we said that that child was one of that family of which He is the elder Brother and the Head; we said that this child is a spirit child, and is therefore greater and diviner, not only than the sheep and the oxen, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, but than the earth and the air and the sky about us. Do not forget that, you that are parents. Do not forget what treasures God has put into your hands. And since you know that you cannot take care of them yourselves, do not forget that you have committed them to God; that He has promised them greater blessings than you can ask for or dream of, and that that promise He for His part will most surely keep and perform.

Take every autumn as it comes round and brings you in the fruits of the tiny seeds that you sowed last autumn, or last spring, as a witness and pledge that He does not neglect any, the least things, and that He does not merely give you rain to nourish them, and sun to ripen them, but that He gives you what is much better—power to work, and wisdom to know how you should work in the right way. Thank Him for not scattering the fruits in your path without your labour; you would soon become miserable heartless creatures if He did. Thank Him for caring more to make you brave and true than to make you easy and weak and self-indulgent. Thank Him for having set you over the sheep and the oxen, and the fowls of the air, and the

fishes of the sea. Thank Him for having given you the moon and stars, not only to direct you in your path, but to make you wonder and ask after Him. Thank Him that He has given you all these lesson-books for your children as well as you. Thank Him because He has said there will be a day in which He will gather up all things unto Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth, unto Him who is the Head over all His universe; and when every child, and every star, and every animal, and every flower, shall be seen to have been created by infinite love for His infinite glory.

SERMON XVII.

GOD AND MAMMON.

Preached at Redmarley, Morning of the 15th Sunday after Trinity, September 8, 1861.

"No man can serve two Masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other—ye cannot serve God and Mammon."—ST. MATTHEW vi. 24.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ knew what was in man. He knew what the people in Judæa were thinking and were trying to do eighteen hundred and sixty years ago. He knew what the people in England would be thinking and trying to do in our day. The people of Judæa professed to worship one God—the Lord God of their fathers; the Lord God who had delivered their fathers out of bondage, who had given them bread and water as they came through the wilderness; who had promised them a good land in which they should dwell; who had been with them and with their seed after them. That was the God to whom the temple was built. That was the God to whom the priests offered sacrifices. But when they were not in the temple they were about their farms and their merchandise. It was their duty to be about their farms and their merchandise. They were set in the world to till the land. The

sea was given them that they might send their ships across it, and might send their good things to other lands, and receive the good things of those lands in exchange. God had appointed the sea and the land; God had set them their work to do. How cheerfully they would have done these works if they had believed that! With what glad hearts they would have risen in the morning if they had been sure that the good God, their deliverer and their friend, was rousing them to their day's labour, and would be with them all through it! How pleasantly they would have laid themselves down at night if they had remembered that He who never slumbers nor sleeps was watching over them while they slept! How comfortable it would have been to remember all the day, 'He is our God and our neighbours' God. He helps them to work as He helps us; He cares for them as He cares for us.'

But it was not so. These Jews, when they were at their farms and their merchandise, did not remember the God whom they had worshipped in the temple. They thought chiefly of what they were to get by their labour; how much money would come of it. Each thought, 'How much more money can I get than my neighbour? How can I hinder him from having the profits that I want for myself?' What came of that? Were they without a God, while they were thinking and plotting this way? No, my friends; men cannot shake off the thought of *some* God, try as hard as they will. They may forget the good God, the true God, the

Maker of heaven and earth—their deliverer and friend. But then they will make to themselves a god; they will make him out of their own hard cruel fancies; they will make him like themselves. So it was with the Jews. They loved money, and money became their god. They did not know it; they would not have confessed it—but so it was. And a very hard savage god it was which they set up for themselves. Not a helper, not a deliverer at all—but a bitter tyrant; not one who cared for all, but one who set up this man and scorned that; not a god who made the people better that served him, but one who made them meaner and baser. This is the god whom our Lord calls mammon—a false god, a god that men had formed for themselves, but all the worse and more mischievous for that.

Now, what our Lord tells the Jews here is, that they could not have these two gods—the gracious loving God of their fathers; the God who sets captives free; who gives liberally to all; who seeks the good of all—and this selfish hard-hearted mammon-god—"Ye cannot serve God and mammon." If you will love mammon, you will hate the good God; if you hold to God, you will despise mammon. You cannot worship one god on the Sabbath days, and the other through the week; you must have the same on the Sabbath days and in the week. If you worship mammon in the week, it will be to him you bring your prayers and offerings on the Sabbaths. You will each come to get him to do something for you, not for your neighbours; you will

each of you come to persuade him not to be your enemy. And again, if you worship the true living God on the Sabbath days, you will have Him with you on all other days.

So He goes on—"Therefore, I say unto you, take no thought for your life what ye shall eat, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on." How is that? Did He mean that His disciples were to be idlers; that they were to trust in God to give them food for their bodies, and clothing for their bodies, without working for it? No, my friends; His disciples were to be hard workers; they were to hate begging. St. Paul said to some of those who had got this notion into their heads of being idle and trusting God, "Those of you that will not work shall not eat." But our Lord knew that it does not make men work better to be anxious and miserable about what should come of their work. He knew that makes bad workers; He knew that turned workers into beggars. They despised getting food and clothing by the labour of their hands, so they ruined themselves and their children by telling stories and asking other people for food or money. So he says—'Do not you act so. Believe you have not a cruel hard mammon-god over you, but a gracious, loving, tender Father, the very same that you pray to in the temple. And, therefore, do not be anxious about what shall come of your labour; trust that to Him. Does He not give you life every day, and is not that more than the meat by which you support life? Did He not give you these curious wonderful bodies of yours?

And is not that more than the dress that you put on your bodies? Look,' He says, 'at these birds that are flying about in the air; does your Father in heaven let them starve? Does not He find food for them? And do not you think that you men whom He has made in His own likeness, whom He so loves that He has sent His Son to take your flesh upon Him, do not you think that you are better than the birds? Suppose you were ever so anxious to be tall men; could you become tall men by being anxious about it? Would that add one inch to your stature? So you see it must be God who is providing for you every minute, every hour. It must be He who is causing your babies to grow. It must be He who is giving you all that you want. Cannot you trust Him?'

And then about your dress. Look at the flowers that grow about the fields and the hedgerows. Do you think any king had ever such beautiful raiment as these have? Do not you know that all the kings of the earth can do is to imitate the beauty of these flowers; to get some robes that look a little like them? And yet these flowers in the fields will be soon mown down. You cast them away; you count them for nothing. Well, do you not think that the God who thinks of these will think of you? Oh, ye of little faith!

'Therefore,' He says, 'do not be anxious and miserable about what you shall eat and what you shall drink. It is all very well for the heathen to do so, for they do not know that they have a Father. They

fancy their gods have a grudge against them, and want them to buy their favour with a great many gifts. But you are told that you have a Father who knows just what you want, just what strength you require for each day. Be remembering Him. Say to yourselves, "He is the King of all the earth, and we are His own children." He wants us to be right, good children. Let us ask Him to make us so; right in all our acts; right in all our thoughts; and then He will take care to send us whatever besides He knows is good for us.'

"Take, therefore," He says, "no thought for the morrow;" that is, do not be fidgety and restless about what shall come to-morrow. You have enough to do each day; enough of evil to bear each day. You need not make yourselves so many trials by fancying what you may have another day. Let that alone; only trust God, the good God who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. And so you will have the true life, the life which will not pass away for ever and ever.

Now, my friends, I said when I began, that our Lord Jesus Christ knew what the Jews were tempted to think and to do at that time; and that He knew what we should be tempted to think and to do at this time. Our temptation is the same as theirs was, the very same. We come here to church on Sunday. We call God our Almighty and most merciful Father. We say that we believe He gave His only begotten Son for us all, to die for us, and that He ever lives for us at His Father's right hand. We say that we believe He so cared for us

as to send His own Holy and Loving Spirit to dwell with us, that He might teach us the things we want to know, and help us to do the things we want to do. That is our Sunday doctrine. Then we go out to our different works during the week; and we forget that the God we have heard of in church is the God who rules over our houses and our fields; who gives us children; who enables us to work; who supports our lives. A man who has money, thinks, 'How can I get a little more of this, and a little more still, and a little more still?' A poor man thinks, 'How can I keep myself from starving? for surely all things are against me; the Ruler of the world is against me.' And so, brethren, all of us come by one way or other to get these thoughts into our hearts, that mammon, the money-god, is somehow our master; that he has the upper hand; that our main business is to serve him. I say we are all tempted to this faith. I know that I am. And I know that if I am tempted to it in the week, I must be tempted to it on Sundays. I cannot have two Gods—one for the world and one for the church. I shall have mammon in both if I have him in either. And I know not, brethren, how we should escape having him in both, if it were not for these dear words of our Lord Christ, and for the dear acts which He has done to make them good. I know we should set up a tyrant and worship him, even the cruel, brutal tyrant—this money-god—if He had not come down from heaven to show us what our Father

is, and how He cares for us, and seeks after us, if He had not become a poor man, and had not died upon the cross and risen again and ascended on high. All this bears witness to every clergyman and to every one of his hearers, to every rich man and to every poor man, that there is a Father over all, upon whom they may all depend in all times of their tribulation, and in all times of their wealth, and in the hour of death and in the day of judgment; One to whom they may give up themselves and their children, their bodies and their souls, as to a faithful and loving Creator who has so loved them that He gave up His own Son for them all. Yes, verily, brethren, and it is not I only who preach to you of this Father. The birds of the air preach of Him, the flowers of the field preach of Him; all these say: 'The mammon-god did not create us; the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ created us. His love has called us into existence. His love watches over the life of every man and woman and child.'

Therefore, do you men and women and children trust in Him, and give your hearts to Him, and ask Him to make you right and true, and to make you love each other as He loves you.

And ask Him to deliver you from the worship of the mammon-god; for in very deed he is the false evil spirit, the devil who is seeking to destroy those bodies and souls in hell which the Son of God died to save, and to make heirs of Eternal Life.

SERMON XVIII.

THE GLORY OF THE CROSS.

Preached at Redmarley, Afternoon of the 15th Sunday after Trinity, September 8, 1861.

"But God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Christ Jesus my Lord, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."—GALATIANS vi. 14.

I EXPLAINED to you last Sunday how the Galatians had been drawn away to think St. Paul their enemy, though they had once counted him their best friend. He had written them a letter with his own hand (commonly he employed some of his companions to write for him), to tell them how they had mistaken him, and how much they had injured themselves by listening to the people who slandered him. The words we read in the Epistle for this morning are the end of his letter. They are good for us to read and to think of, because they show us what bound St. Paul to these Galatians for all that they had used him so ill, and what binds him to us, for all that we were born into the world so many hundreds of years after he left it.

The Galatians had been persuaded that they must

become like the Jews, and must have the sign of the covenant if they would have God's favour. St. Paul was a Jew himself, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; he says he had once been very proud of his privileges as a Jew. He had once despised all other nations and thought that they were cut off from God; but he had cast away that pride; he had found that he was not in himself a whit better than other people, let him have been born where he might, let him have had ever so many advantages, ever such a good law, ever such a holy covenant. He could not, he would not, glory then on this ground any more. And he made the Galatians understand that if they tried to find this excuse for glorying, they would be sadly disappointed. They would not be able to keep God's law any better than they had kept it hitherto, if they made themselves like the Jews; they would not love one another or love God better. But he had not given over glorying because he did not glory in being unlike the rest of men. And he would not have the Galatians cease from glorying, though that was no good pretence for it. What could he glory in then? In that which did not separate him from his neighbours, but united him to his neighbours. In that which did not separate him from those who quarrelled with him, but was as great a blessing to them as to him. In that which did not belong to one people or to one time, but to all people and all time.

"God forbid," he says, "that I should glory save in the Cross of Christ Jesus my Lord."

Now just think what that means. The Romans had many ways of putting men to death, but there was one way which was the most shameful of all, one way which they kept for slaves and for people who had committed the greatest crimes, that was the death of crucifixion, a death of hanging on a cross. When St. Paul came preaching of Jesus as the Son of God; people listened to him for a while. They said, 'Yes; it is just possible that some great ruler may have come upon earth, or some very wise man who deserves that name.' But when he said, 'He whom I say is the Son of God, is Jesus of Nazareth, who was called a carpenter's son, and who was crucified by Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor' — then they cried out, 'How monstrous! Can you expect us to believe that? To think of the God of Heaven making himself known to us in a man who underwent such a death as this!' But St. Paul said, 'I can proclaim to you no other. That is the King to whom I bow. That is the Son of God in whom I believe.' Yes, and that is the King, the Son of God, whom you need, one and all of you. You want a King who can stoop to the state of the lowest and most wretched of His subjects. You want a Son of God who shows that the love of God is stronger than the wickedness of man, and than the ingratitude of man. You want a Son of God who can show that love is stronger than death. Any other will not avail you. Any other is not a King and a Saviour and a Son of God for sinful men. Any other is not a King and a

Saviour, and a Son of God for dying men. Any other is not a King, and a Saviour, and a Son of God for all men,—for men of every kindred and tribe; for all times; for the rich and poor; the wise and the unwise; for the man that is highest in the world's esteem, and for the outcast that is most trodden under foot. A crucified Lord is for all of these and for each of them. If He is the Son of God, the Image of His Father, then I can know what God is; what His character is; what His will to all human creatures is. If he is King of men, then I can know what sort of government men are under; what hope there is that they may overcome their enemies. And so he says, 'Since I cannot glory in myself, or in my descent, or in my difference from other people, any longer, I will glory in this, I will think of this, the cross of Christ, and I will boast of that, and be proud of that; I will say, He who hung there is my Lord. He who hung there is the Christ with whom God is well pleased. I will exult in Him because I know that He has redeemed me who would have been a poor slave of my own lusts and my own vanity if I had been left to myself. I will exult in Him, because He has redeemed all mankind as well as me; because there is no creature in any corner of God's wide universe whom He has been ashamed to call His brother. That is my warrant for boasting in this Cross, and nothing can take that right from me. If it is said that I am good for nothing, I confess it,

therefore I glory in this Cross. If it is said that death and the grave have set their mark upon me, I confess it, therefore I glory in this Cross. If it is said that I cannot make out any reason why God should care for me any more than for any vagabond on the earth, I confess it, therefore I glory in this Cross. If it is said that the Cross itself was humiliating and degrading, I confess it, therefore I glory in Him who submitted to the Cross.'

And so he goes on. "By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." That is as if he had said, 'I know perfectly well that this seems to Jews and Gentiles both—to those who call themselves God's people, and to those who worship idols—very strange, and ridiculous, and contemptible. It seemed to me as strange, and ridiculous, and contemptible, as it could to any one. But since I hold this to be the sign of my deliverance and of the world's deliverance, since this is what fastens me to all men and makes me care for all men, I cannot much mind their opinion or even my own opinion. The nails of this Cross go through the world's opinions, and my own. I know very well how one man glories against another, and one nation against another, one religious society against another. I know how I have gloried against my fellow-men, but now I cannot do that any more.' The Son of God is lifted up above all the conceit and arrogance of me and of you, and of all the people in the earth, let them be who or what they may. That, I take it, is at

least a little part of the meaning of these words—"By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." It may be a very little part indeed, you may find a great deal more of what it means hereafter; I hope you, and I hope I, shall. If we hold fast to the first part of the sentence and determine we will live upon that, we shall be sure to find out something more of the length and depth and breadth of the latter part every day. Yes; each of you may do that; for consider, my friends, what is all I have been saying, all that St. Paul has been saying, good for, if it does not declare what every creature upon earth may delight in, what may lift every creature upon earth above the earth, yes, may lift them out of a deep beneath the earth. Why should St. Paul glory in the Cross of Christ, if not because "Christ being in the form of God, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made subject to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him, giving Him a name which is above every name." And if it be so, each one of us who is furthest from St. Paul's stature of holiness may begin to do just what he did. We may swear that we will glory in nothing save the Cross of Christ, not because we are strong, but because we are weak; not because we are great, but because we are little; not because we have deserved anything of God, but because we have erred and strayed from Him. We may glory in the Cross of Christ because He bore it that He might claim fellowship with all of us, and

might raise us out of all our sins, and might make of our crosses blessings, and love-tokens to us.

And if we do glory in the Cross of Christ, we may be sure that we are doing what the angels in heaven and the spirits of just men made perfect are doing. We shall be entering into the song of triumph; for it is this, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive glory, and dominion, and praise, and honour." And in that song, we are told, all that are on the earth, and all that are under the earth, will surely join.

SERMON XIX.

THE WIDOW OF NAIN'S SON.

Preached at Redmarley, 16th Sunday after Trinity, September 15th, 1861.

"And it came to pass the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him and much people. Now when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And He came and touched the bier, and they that bare him stood still."—ST. LUKE vii. 11—14.

THERE are not many instances of our Lord raising the dead told us in the Gospels. The daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus, and this one of the widow of Nain's son, are, I think, all: and I think it is good for us that there should be no more. We are all ready enough to fancy, as I said to you once before, that those who were upon earth when our Lord was here in the flesh, were treated better than we are. If widows who are weeping for their only sons in our day and our land were to think that all the widows in Galilee and Judæa at that time had their children given back to them, they might ask,

'Why were we not born there? Why are we so far from that blessed two years?' But if they only read of this one widow of Nain—they may begin to consider that that must have been intended as a sign to a multitude of people beside her; to them amongst the rest. And then they may ask, 'And what is it a sign of? How are we better for the sign? Will it give us any comfort in our trouble?' Let us look at the story and see.

It is a common story enough. Out of the gate of a city a body is carried to be buried. That is all that most would have said who saw the funeral passing. A few may have asked, 'Whose is it?' A few will have known that it was the widow's son. A few will have cared both for him and for her. But there is One who meets the bier; He is called in the Gospels the Son of Man. He, it is said, saw the widow, and had compassion upon her. He knew exactly what was passing in her mind, all the thoughts that she had about her son; all her recollections of him; all that she could not tell to any one else, or make any one else understand; all her anxiety about what he had been, and what he was then. Her friends might say a great many words in her ear—some good, some foolish. One or two of their words might go down into her heart. But He had compassion upon her—that is to say, He bore her pain with her; He felt it Himself in His own heart. He did not stand aloof from any one of her pains and perplexities. He went into them as she could not do. It is written, "Himself took our infirmities;" and that thought must

mean more than I or any one can imagine—it must mean this, that He entered into the trials and infirmities of all human beings. Well, then, the compassion of Jesus the Son of Man, for this particular woman, is a sign of His compassion for all who are going through the trial which she went through. I say for *all*. We are not told that there was anything peculiar in this widow of Nain. She was a woman who had lost her husband and her son; that is all we know of her. No doubt she felt her loss as if no one had felt the same before, and as if no one could feel it after. Every one does; every one feels the whole burden of death pressing upon herself. And He bore that burden with her; and He bears it with all others who have the same laid upon them, in that country or this, eighteen hundred years ago or now. Remember that. And when you read the words, "Jesus had compassion on her," do not take them for light words; they are the mightiest words you can hear. It is the compassion of the Son of God and the Son of Man. It is compassion for all sorrowing people, and for each sorrowing man or woman, for He is the Brother of each, and He was Himself the great sorrower of all.

But next he said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." Here, you say, the likeness ends. The first words might be a sign to us; these cannot be. He does not meet the biers that we crowd into our churchyards. He does not say to those in them, "Arise." My friends, the Gospel calls these acts of our Lord *signs*, and I am sure the Gospel speaks truly. I am not,

therefore, going to give up the belief that these words are a sign to widows, a sign to all of us, however at first we may be inclined to think that they are not so, and cannot be. I could not explain this to you, but Christ can. Let us hear His words, as they are written in the 25th verse of the 5th chapter of the Gospel of St. John—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those that hear shall live." Well, perhaps that applied to Lazarus, whom the people to whom He was then speaking would afterwards see coming out of the grave in which he had been laid four days. But now hear how He proceeds in the 28th verse—"Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth." So that you see He tells them it was not wonderful that even men in their graves should hear the voice of the Son of God, because all that are in the graves shall hear His voice. Afterwards He gave them a sign in one case of what was true always. One man actually appeared before their eyes in answer to His voice; actually came back into this earth which he had left, that they might understand how it would be with all. And this was to show that, as He had told the Jews, He had life in Himself, and gives that life to men. As He told this to the Jews, so he told Martha—when she would not believe it, but spoke in a despairing way about the resurrection,—that He was the resurrection and the

life, and that whosoever believed in Him, though he were dead, yet should he live. So then I have a right to tell you, that when He said to the widow's son, "Young man, arise!" He was as much giving a sign to other widows, as He was when He had compassion on her, and felt with her. He was saying to them all —'Your sons are all to arise.' You cannot see them again for a few years more, as the widow of Nain may have seen her son, and then had to part with him again when he died, or when she died. But you may be sure that they will hear the voice of the Son of Man; you may be sure that that will go through them, and will have power to quicken their mortal bodies. You may be sure that as He raised up His own body out of the grave, He will raise up theirs. For He died because He had taken our nature upon Him, and He rose again because He had redeemed us from death and the grave. Therefore, I say, we are to receive this sign—all of us—and to lay it to heart, and to assure ourselves that the Son of Man had not more power on earth than He has now; but that the power He used on earth was only a pledge and a witness of that which He has been putting forth ever since, and of that which He will put forth for all whom we know, and for every one of us.

And I would not have you forget the next words. "The young man sat up and began to speak." That was a sign that he was really the same person he had always been. He had the same power of speech as

00067770

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018